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# General Assembly
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*Official Records*

**48**th plenary meeting
Thursday, 29 October 1998, 10 a.m.
New York

*President*: Mr. Opertti ..... (Uruguay)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Agenda item 8** (*continued*)

**Adoption of the agenda and organization of work**

**Letter from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences (A/53/298/Add.2)**

**The President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): This morning I should like first of all to draw the attention of representatives to document A/53/298/Add.2, which contains a letter dated 27 October 1998 addressed to the President of the General Assembly by the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences.

As members are aware, the Assembly, in section I, paragraph 7 of its resolution 40/243, decided that no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly may meet at United Nations Headquarters during a regular session of the Assembly unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

As indicated in the letter I have just mentioned, the Committee on Conferences has recommended that the General Assembly authorize the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories to meet in New York from 2 to 5 November 1998, during the main part of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt the recommendation of the Committee on Conferences?

*It was so decided.*

**Agenda item 22**

**Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/53/306)**

**Draft resolution (A/53/L.9)**

**The President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call on the representative of India to introduce draft resolution A/53/L.9.

**Mr. Rao** (India): As I am taking the floor for the first time in the General Assembly, may I be permitted to pay my personal tribute to you, Sir, having known you for some time as a colleague of high distinction and great human consideration and with great qualities of leadership and a gift to contribute to the high ideals of the United Nations. It is therefore fitting that you occupy the high office of President of the General Assembly this year. I wish you and your colleagues on the Bureau every success in all your endeavours.

98-86236 (E)

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Turning to the agenda item under consideration, over the last 40 years, the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC) has acquired a unique stature in promoting legal cooperation among Asian and African States in the important field of international law. With the establishment of a permanent headquarters in New Delhi, the Committee is all set to intensify its work and aim at achieving higher and more broad-based goals in the discharge of its mandate. Its initiatives were well received at the various United Nations conferences, particularly those dealing with the law of treaties and the law of the sea, and have immensely contributed to a world order that is universally respected and treated as fair and equitable for all States.

The annual conferences of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee are major events in international law and the New Delhi session this year in April was well attended. Ministers and senior officers of member States and several observer delegations and representatives of various international organizations participated and contributed to the value of the deliberations. The exchange of views on contemporary issues of international law, including subjects being studied by the International Law Commission and issues arising in connection with the implementation of the world trade regime, proved and will prove highly beneficial to member States and other participants.

These views were duly communicated by the Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee to the United Nations, of which it has the distinction of being an observer, and to the International law Commission, whose sessions he regularly attends.

In addition to the annual meetings, discussions are also held in special sessions of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee. Specials sessions held on the establishment of the International Criminal Court, the law concerning reservations to treaties, the treatment of refugees, the exercise of extraterritorial jurisdiction in the international legal order and the proposed meetings on the law of the world trade regime and the review of procedures on the settlement of disputes are some recent examples of its work this year. Reports of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee and other declarations adopted by the Committee as a result of these special sessions have become an important source for the development of international law and are an expression of the views and interests of Asian and African States. It is particularly noteworthy that, through these efforts, the Committee has been dedicating its efforts to identify the common interests of Africa and Asia on a variety of contemporary issues before the United Nations and other world bodies and, in the process, is helping the evolution of a fair, just, equitable and universal legal order.

It is a matter of great pride for all of us that the Committee is one of the few international organizations which function on a very economical budget. Its annual budget is among the lowest for such intergovernmental organizations. From seven States initially, it has now grown to become an organization with 45 member States and has further plans to expand.

We would like to encourage the Committee to expand its activities. The Committee has several forward-looking plans for the benefit of its member States. In this regard, mention could be made of special training programmes for promoting teaching and expertise in legal advising in international law; the establishment of special chairs in international law teaching in various universities of member States; the offer of fellowships to Asian and African students to pursue higher studies in international law; and encouragement of the publication of books and periodicals devoted to the cause of international law and of special interest to Asia and Africa.

It may also be noted that the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee was established to provide expertise in international law to the Asian and African States and specific assistance and advice, upon request, on any topic of international law to those member States. Such advice could be rendered, for example, on developing a suitable legal framework or legislation for the implementation of international treaties; on providing a model agreement to establish joint cooperative arrangements; or on rendering an opinion on a given subject to one or more member States.

It is well understood, however, that some of these activities can be pursued and their aims successfully achieved only with the availability of more funds. The clearance of arrears in contributions and raising funds through voluntary contributions could be of some help.

It is a matter of great pride to note that, in spite of its financial limitations, the work of the Committee is efficiently organized by a small but dedicated band of international law experts working under the guidance of an international diplomatic staff, including its most competent Secretary-General. It has an excellent library. These facilities can and should be further improved. In due course of time, the Committee could operate as an

international law documentation centre for the benefit of the Asian and African States.

We are very optimistic that, in the years to come, the Committee will pay greater attention to many of these aspects and achieve greater glory in clarifying and consolidating the common interests of Asian and African States — and indeed, I might say, the common interests of the international community. It will also surely enhance its activities in training and the dissemination of international law expertise among Asian and African States. Such a step would further strengthen the role of Asian and African States in evolving a just, fair, equitable and universal legal order for all States. We have no doubt that, in this great endeavour, the cooperation between AALCC and the United Nations will continue to grow stronger and stronger. We wish the Committee and its members every success and hope that the United Nations and its membership will continue to provide it with needed strength, support and assistance.

I would ask the General Assembly to adopt the draft resolution contained in document A/53/L.9, which is now sponsored by a number of delegations: Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Ghana, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Kenya, Myanmar, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Sudan.

**Mr. Herndl** (Austria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the Union — the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated country, Cyprus, align themselves with this statement.

Item 22 of the General Assembly's agenda, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee", offers an opportunity, every two years, to appreciate and assess an ongoing process of cooperation which from modest beginnings in 1980 has evolved into a fruitful relationship benefiting both partners. The mutual exchange of ideas and thoughts, of reflections and practical considerations in the field of international law and international legal cooperation is a hallmark of this relationship.

I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report in document A/53/306, which elucidates the framework of the cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee and the areas in which concrete action has taken place. Two years ago, the European Union had occasion to speak, in the present context, of a veritable *embarras de richesse*. This statement still holds true. The Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, whose legal coordination activities span two continents, is participating actively in the programmes of the United Nations Decade of International Law and in programmes on environment and sustainable development. Those areas were explicitly mentioned in General Assembly resolution 51/11, adopted in November 1996. The field of cooperation is, however, still expanding.

The European Union notes with satisfaction the positive relationship which the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee has established with the International Law Commission. In paragraph 22 of its latest annual report, document A/53/10, the Commission refers to a "useful dialogue on subjects of common interest", conducted with the Consultative Committee. As the Secretary-General's report points out, the Consultative Committee has undertaken analytical work on the issue of reservations, currently under study by the International Law Commission. This led the Commission's Special Rapporteur on reservations to state that he was favourably impressed by the interest shown in the relevant work of the Commission, as illustrated by, *inter alia*, the work done on the topic of reservations by the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee.

Since the last discussion of this item by the General Assembly, the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, has also held a special meeting on the interrelated aspects of international humanitarian law and the future International Criminal Court, thus offering an additional opportunity for an informal exchange of views on the issues related to the creation of such a court — issues which at that stage were debated within the Preparatory Committee on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court. The Consultative Committee in fact participated in the famous Rome Conference which resulted in the adoption of the Statute of the Court.

What we are thus witnessing is an ever evolving cooperative relationship between the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee and the United Nations which, if I may say so, has a positive impact on the work of the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly. The Consultative Committee is closely following the progressive codification of international law through the International Law Commission. It is also cooperating with United Nations Commission on International Trade

Law (UNCITRAL) in the area of trade law in general and more particularly in the area of insolvency law, with the international bodies set up in the field of the law of the sea, with the World Trade Organization and with humanitarian institutions, particularly the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. In this respect, it is worth noting that as early as 1966, the Consultative Committee elaborated principles concerning the treatment of refugees — the so-called Bangkok Principles.

In conclusion, the European Union expresses the wish that the fruitful cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, which we are witnessing, will continue in the future to the mutual benefit of both partners.

**Mr. Mirzaee Yengejeh** (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me to begin by expressing the appreciation of my delegation to the Secretary-General for his report on the cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, contained in document A/53/306.

Four decades ago we, the Asian and African nations, established the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC) in order to play an active role in bringing the rule of law into international relations and to participate actively in the lawmaking process in the international arena. Since its inception, the AALCC has undertaken a number of studies in the field of international legal matters of common concern to the two continents. Moreover, it has functioned as an important forum for exchange of views and information among its member States. It has played a significant role in exploring and harmonizing the needs, views and positions of African and Asian countries concerning various aspects of lawmaking at the international level.

A common objective — striving for the progressive development of international law and its codification — links the AALCC with the United Nations. It was that common aim that led to commencement of cooperation between the two organizations after the foundation of the AALCC in 1956. By the granting of observer status to the AALCC in 1980, this flourishing cooperation was institutionalized and continues to this day. The Consultative Committee continues to accord priority in its programme of work to the topics on the General Assembly's agenda. It has undertaken a systematic and consistent examination of items on the agenda of the Sixth Committee and the International Law Commission from Asian and African perspectives. Moreover, areas of cooperation between the two organizations is not limited to the field of international law but covers economic, environmental and humanitarian areas as well.

In the last two years the Consultative Committee carried out a number of noteworthy activities and constructively participated in the major legal projects of the United Nations. The question of refugees remained one of the priority items on the agenda of the Consultative Committee, and, with the cooperation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), two seminars were held — in Manila and Tehran — in the years under review. With the objective of preparing a piece of model legislation, the question of the legal protection of migrant workers has been placed on the agenda of the Consultative Committee. Another new item, "Extraterritorial application of national legislation: sanctions imposed against third parties", which has relevance to the activities of the United Nations in the areas of free trade and economic development, has been placed on the agenda of the AALCC.

I wish to stress the significant contribution of the AALCC in the exercises that led to the adoption of the Statute of the International Criminal Court on 17 July 1998 in Rome. The Consultative Committee, with the cooperation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), organized a special meeting on the establishment of an international criminal court during its thirty-sixth annual session in Tehran. At that meeting the interrelated aspects of international humanitarian law and the international criminal court were discussed by the participants and experts from the ICRC. Consultations among member States of the AALCC on this topic continued in Rome during the Diplomatic Conference on the establishment of the International Criminal Court.

In conclusion, the report before the General Assembly illustrates in detail the very constructive cooperation between the United Nations and the AALCC in the last two years. We feel that prospects for future cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee are quite bright. This is why the Islamic Republic of Iran has co-sponsored the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, contained in document A/53/L.9, and expresses its hope that the draft resolution will receive the unanimous support of the Assembly.

**Mr. De Saram** (Sri Lanka): The Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC) is an organization with a large membership, a vast geographical scope and a record of work in several fields of international legal interest. Above all else, it is an organization with an important and broad purpose — that of promoting and developing greater awareness in the international legal communities of Africa and Asia of the many, the ever expanding, the often very complex, contemporary developments in the fields of public and private international law.

It is only natural, therefore, that there should be a cooperative relationship between the AALCC and the United Nations — a relationship whose personifications for those of us who work in the corridors, the lounges and the conference rooms of the United Nations here in New York, are, of course, on the United Nations side of the relationship: the Legal Counsel of the United Nations, Under-Secretary-General Hans Corell, and his colleagues in the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs, and, on the side of the AALCC, the ever present and ever informative figure of the Permanent Observer of the AALCC, Ambassador Bhagwat-Singh.

If the development of a network of formal and informal relationships between the AALCC and the United Nations and the dissemination of documentation and information on the numerous legal happenings at the United Nations are essential to a cooperative relationship, it is crucial that we also remind ourselves from time to time that the ultimate objective of the AALCC — its ultimate long-term responsibility in its relationship with the United Nations — is surely that of moving its vast African and Asian membership collectively forward to the stage at which all will be in a position to participate fully and effectively in the many and various multilateral legal forums in which the United Nations system of organizations abounds.

It is a formidable objective that requires a formidable endeavour. Yet it is an endeavour that surely must be made.

The processes of consultation and coordination among representatives having a measure of commonality of interest is necessary in international parliamentary diplomacy. It is fundamental here at the United Nations, in the multilateral international legal context, where, as we all know, legal and other technicalities intertwine with political and other subtleties in time-consuming debate, negotiation and the examination of draft texts that are sometimes far from clear as to their specific purpose.

The practice of consultation and coordination is one that other regional groups having commonalities of interests have already achieved. Some, I feel sure, have, in the practice of consultation and coordination, achieved a high and desirable degree of facility and sophistication.

Those of us from Africa and Asia still have a long way to go. The difficulties are compounded by the practical disadvantages with which we are still encumbered, certainly in the legal field: absence of adequate access, or sometimes no access whatsoever, to documentation and legal periodicals and to centres of legal research and analysis. We are disadvantaged as well, it is clear, when we face the far greater resources with which larger delegations and larger Permanent Missions are clearly blessed.

Thus, it is inevitable that for many of us, as member States of the AALCC, the ultimate goal is an imperative: full and effective consultation and coordination in preparations for legal meetings, which require the identification of issues and the marshalling of necessary information and of precise and comprehensive argumentation.

If there are to be truly meaningful proceedings in the multilateral legal context here at the United Nations, then all States in all legal deliberative bodies must surely stand on the same plateau of awareness and knowledge. It is a difficult and distant goal. Yet it is one that we in the United Nations and, particularly, we in the AALCC, must strive to achieve.

I look forward to working with colleagues in the AALCC, and indeed with colleagues outside of the AALCC, in determining how we in the AALCC might best achieve such coordinative and consultative mechanisms and procedures.

Finally, may I convey my profound respects and very best wishes to the Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, Mr. Tang, and to his colleagues. I shall look forward to consulting with them on some of the matters of which I have just spoken.

**Mr. Yin Yubiao** (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal

Consultative Committee (AALCC). We shall soon be hearing a statement by Mr. Tang Chengyuan, Secretary-General of the AALCC. We are very pleased to note the strengthening of relations and the broadening of the scope of the cooperation between the two organizations.

As an intergovernmental consultative body of Asian and African countries on legal matters, the AALCC has been dedicated since its inception to consultation and coordination among its member States on legal matters; it has followed and studied the latest developments in the field of international law and has conducted in-depth studies of legal matters of common concern to Asian and African countries; it has achieved positive results. Experience shows that the AALCC has not only provided a forum for discussion and cooperation between Asian and African countries on legal questions and other matters of common concern but has also contributed to the progressive development and codification of international law. Through all these endeavours it has established itself as a regional organization with unique influence in the field of law. We are confident that, with the passage of time, this influence will further increase.

Since becoming an observer in the General Assembly, the AALCC has developed closer ties of cooperation with the United Nations. The annual meetings of the AALCC are attended not only by the representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations but also by representatives of the International Law Commission (ILC), the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to name only some. Meanwhile, the AALCC sends representatives to various meetings within the United Nations system; they play an active part in deliberations on relevant matters and make a positive contribution. Over the years, the AALCC has always given priority to legal and other matters that are of concern to the United Nations. Its cooperation with the ILC stands out in this regard. The AALCC invites the members of the ILC to its annual meeting to brief it on the work of the Commission, and also includes the report of the ILC on its agenda as a perennial item and puts forward proposals in that regard. On the other hand, the Secretary-General of the AALCC attends the annual meeting of the ILC and briefs its members on the work of the Committee. Cooperation between those two bodies has been fruitful and satisfactory.

Last April, the thirty-seventh annual session of the AALCC was convened at New Delhi; it considered in depth and in detail such important matters as the work of the ILC, the establishment of an International Criminal Court, the United Nations Decade of International Law, the law of the sea, the protection of the environment, treaty reservations, refugees, the extraterritorial applicability of domestic laws, and international waterways. As a result, mutual understanding and cooperation among member States on those matters has been enhanced.

As a member of the United Nations and of the AALCC, China is very pleased with the ever closer and expanding cooperation between the two organizations. We hope that the two organizations will further enhance their cooperation in the field of the progressive development and codification of international law and in other fields of common concern, and that this will serve as a model for the development of close ties and cooperation between international and regional organizations for the achievement of world peace and development.

In the light of what I have said, the Chinese delegation takes great pleasure in having joined other Asian and African countries in sponsoring draft resolution A/53/L.9, on cooperation between the United Nations and the AALCC.

The Chinese Government attaches great importance to the AALCC. Since becoming a full member of the AALCC in 1983, we have taken an active part in its work and have given it all possible support. We will continue to contribute to the further strengthening of the role and influence of the AALCC and to closer cooperation between the United Nations and the Committee.

**Ms. Syahruddin** (Indonesia): At the outset, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report contained in document A/53/306.

It is fitting to recall that more than four decades ago, as an outcome of the Bandung Conference, the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC) emerged, embracing the two sister continents of Asia and Africa and gradually establishing itself as a major forum for international cooperation. Without a doubt, that historic conference has few parallels, in terms of history, in terms of the vastness of the areas it represented or in terms of the lofty objectives it aimed to achieve. It had a momentous impact on forging an identity between groups of nations with different political, economic and social

structures, and in its dynamism became an independent force in international affairs. In this regard, Indonesia takes great pride in having been one of the seven founding States to have sponsored the AALCC at Bandung in 1955.

In its work, the AALCC has long oriented its activities to complement the work of the United Nations, and has established close relations with the Organization and its various agencies engaged in activities in the field of law and in economic relations. This culminated in the decision of the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session to accord permanent observer status to the AALCC, a distinction that it shares with few other international organizations.

Following close consultations between officials of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the AALCC, a programme of cooperation was drawn up and remains a regular feature to this day. In this regard, the AALCC has undertaken important initiatives with a view to strengthening the role of the United Nations. The report of the Secretary-General has focused our attention on such activities. What is noteworthy is that these areas are not confined to the membership of the AALCC, but also involve interested States Members of the United Nations. Furthermore, areas of cooperation have been expanded to cover issues of economic cooperation, the environment and refugees, in addition to work in the field of the progressive codification of international law.

We appreciate the degree and extent of cooperation between the United Nations and the AALCC. The AALCC continues to be represented at various meetings and conferences held under the auspices of the United Nations, including the sessions of the General Assembly, the United Nations Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court, and the sessions of the International Law Commission (ILC), the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

When the General Assembly declared the period 1990-1999 as the United Nations Decade of International Law, it was clear from the outset that the AALCC, as a unique regional organization, would play an important role in the attainment and realization of the objectives set out for the Decade. Indonesia, for its part, considers the United Nations Decade of International Law to be of great importance to developing countries in particular, and it earnestly hopes that as we near the end of this period, the participation of the AALCC in activities such as training in international law, the holding of seminars and the intensification of cooperation between United Nations bodies and the AALCC will be further enhanced.

The work of the Sixth Committee is of special interest to the AALCC, and the latter prepares notes and comments on items under consideration in order to assist Member States in their participation. Such assistance contributes to a more fruitful outcome of those deliberations. Of particular relevance is the AALCC's close links with the International Law Commission (ILC) and the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL). With regard to the ILC, it was at the behest of the AALCC that the agenda items entitled "Diplomatic Protection" and the initiation of a feasibility study on the "Law of environment" were thereafter taken into consideration. During the period under review, the cooperation between the AALCC and UNCITRAL continues to be close, as AALCC submitted notes and comments on the items on the agenda of UNCITRAL at its last two sessions.

In this regard, my delegation is confident that such close links will foster trade at the interregional as well as the global levels. The participation of the two bodies has also contributed towards the development and codification of legal norms of international trade law that would reflect the interests of the developing countries.

Indonesia has always attached paramount importance to the subject of the law of the sea. It should be recalled that it was at the request of Indonesia that this item was included in the agenda of the AALCC in 1971. We are therefore most gratified by the endeavours of the AALCC to promote the ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Furthermore, the advice of the AALCC to Member States to fully participate in the International Seabed Authority is to be welcomed, as this would ensure that the legitimate interests of the developing nations are safeguarded. Concurrently, it has worked towards strengthening the principle of the common heritage of mankind. The efforts of the AALCC, through its notes and comments on the item "Oceans and law of the sea", offer valuable guidance to Member States in preparing for its discussion in the General Assembly.

Although the role of the AALCC was initially in the field of international law, it has broadened its objectives to provide a forum for international economic cooperation for development. In this regard, the report of the Secretary-General aptly alludes to the activities

undertaken in this field. One of the issues that it has recently addressed concerns the legal issues arising out of the privatization of public sector undertakings and the liberalization of economic activities as a means of increasing economic efficiency. We remain fully confident that the AALCC will continue its endeavours towards promoting economic cooperation within an appropriate framework which could blend economic and legal aspects, in which cooperation as an effective instrument can contribute to lasting growth.

In a global environment where flashpoints of unrest persist throughout the world, the refugee issue remains an outstanding and unresolved problem. In this regard, my delegation is encouraged by the cooperation existing between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the AALCC, and the ongoing efforts in the area of refugee law and refugee problems. With the assistance of the UNHCR, a seminar was held to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the principles adopted at Bangkok by the AALCC concerning the treatment of refugees. We look forward with interest to the consideration of the proposal of the meeting of experts convened in Tehran.

It is important to note the other issues before the AALCC, namely, the environment, migrant workers and the item entitled "Extraterritorial application of national legislation: sanctions imposed against third parties". Indonesia, for its part, is pleased to support the activities of the AALCC and remains confident that such worthy efforts will continue to strengthen the AALCC's contributions to the Organization and to the international community.

In conclusion, Indonesia, as a founding member of the AALCC, is pleased to co-sponsor the draft resolution before us entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee", as contained in document A/53/L.9.

**Mr. Gaa** (Philippines): I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the agenda item before us. The report is a very useful gauge not only of the cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, but also of the achievements of the Committee.

When the Committee was formed over four decades ago, the major challenge that faced it was how to play a major role in one of the most fundamental global transformations in history — a transformation that changed the complexion of the international community. During the time when the newly independent States of Asia and Africa began emerging from colonial rule, the Committee proved to be a critical and invaluable player in creating a wider appreciation of international legal issues among its members by serving as a forum for consultation and cooperation on legal issues between Asian and African States. During that critical time and even after, the Committee contributed to the formulation and progressive development of international law by taking into account the political and economic needs of those developing countries.

I join other speakers in noting the many specific instances in which the Committee contributed to the formation and progressive development of international law.

Today, as we stand on the doorstep of a new millennium, another fundamental global transformation is facing the Committee: the challenge of globalization. It is a challenge that the Committee, with its decades of experience and with an understanding of the needs of its members, is all too ready to face. As the Committee has already shown success in formulating common approaches to complex international legal issues, the Philippines is confident that it will be able to face this new challenge.

The Committee will be conducting its work against a backdrop of complex and profound international events and transformations. Those events have brought welcome changes, but these have been eclipsed by the problems and difficulties that have forced all of us to call into question some of the traditional and familiar ways in which we have been addressing the challenges facing us.

Whereas once we dwelled in a bipolar and deeply divided world, today we find ours a seamless globalized world. It is a world where the interaction among States has intensified, and this interaction has come in many forms. While the globalized world has meant progress for many, this increased interaction can also mean a possible increase in the potential for misunderstanding. Here the Committee has already proved its worth. Much of its work in the progressive development of international law has been in the area of the formulation of norms, particularly in the areas of economic cooperation, the environment and global resources, that will help States interact with each other in a dynamic but orderly manner. In addition, the Committee has achieved much in the area of dispute resolution, particularly focusing on the

increasing role of the International Court of Justice, as well as on other dispute-settlement mechanisms, such as arbitration.

The United Nations has itself sought to adjust to face challenges of today's globalized world. The Committee can ensure its active participation in dealing with these challenges by continuing to orient its activities to complement the work of the United Nations and by strengthening its close relations with the United Nations and its various agencies engaged in law and economic matters.

Realizing early on that the phenomenon of globalization should be addressed multilaterally, the United Nations has sought the cooperation of other multilateral organizations to strengthen normative, legal and institutional frameworks in the hope that the global economy can be managed more effectively and, perhaps more importantly, more equitably. In this regard, the Committee, with its vast experience of successfully challenging and changing the post-colonial landscape, should prove invaluable.

As a member of the Committee and of this Organization, the Philippines renews its pledge to work towards establishing a global order in which peace prevails and nations live in harmony and security and with their sovereignty respected; an order in which growth and development are rights and not privileges; a world of justice and equality where the individual and his or her rights are respected; a world that protects the earth and that grows and develops only in a manner that will sustain the natural environment.

**Mr. Wilmot** (Ghana): My delegation is happy to observe that since the General Assembly, in its resolution 35/2 of October 1980, invited the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC) to participate in its sessions in the capacity of observer, since the subsequent establishment of the AALCC permanent observer missions to the United Nations in New York and Vienna, and particularly following General Assembly resolution 51/11 of 4 November 1996, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee", there has been a significant widening of the scope of cooperation between the two bodies.

The report of the Secretary-General in document A/53/306 on the item before us gives a succinct account of the various activities undertaken by the AALCC within the cooperation framework. It is clear from this account that the work programme of the Consultative Committee is very supportive of the agenda of the United Nations and focuses substantially on matters of current interest to the Organization. Thus, the AALCC no longer confines itself to the field of international law but now covers as well matters in the economic, environmental and humanitarian fields.

In the economic field, for example, we note with appreciation the AALCC's work programme on international economic cooperation for development, particularly as it relates to the development of international trade law, the dispute mechanism of the World Trade Organization and the regulatory framework for the privatization of public sector undertakings and other liberalization measures within the context of economic reforms.

Equally worthy of note is the Consultative Committee's work in the humanitarian field, particularly its close involvement in the study of refugee law and refugee problems in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

As regards the environment, the AALCC has taken initiatives in prodding the International Law Commission to undertake a feasibility study on "Law of Environment".

Developing countries owe the AALCC a debt of gratitude for the various measures it has taken for the promotion of the ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The Committee has consistently urged the full and effective participation of its member States in the International Seabed Authority so as to ensure and safeguard the legitimate interests of developing countries and to strengthen the principle of the common heritage of mankind. We join the Consultative Committee in calling upon developing countries to give timely consideration to the need to adopt a common policy and strategy for the interim period before the commercial exploitation of deep seabed minerals becomes feasible.

We are also grateful to the AALCC secretariat for facilitating the General Assembly's discussion on the agenda item "Oceans and the law of the sea" by preparing notes and comments for use by representatives of its member States. In this connection, we commend the Committee for its invaluable assistance designed to further the work of the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly.

The AALCC, in pursuance of the cooperation programme, participates in many meetings and conferences held under the auspices of the United Nations. In this regard, my delegation is particularly pleased about the Consultative Committee's participation in the United Nations Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries in Rome in June and July 1998, which culminated in the adoption of the Statute for the establishment of an International Criminal Court. We welcome this development in our collective endeavour to provide a legal and constitutional framework to hold perpetrators accountable for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and serious violations of international humanitarian law. It is pertinent to recall in this regard that the AALCC's initiatives on the interrelated aspects of international humanitarian law and the International Criminal Court contributed significantly to the legal regime of the Court.

We also note with appreciation the Consultative Committee's invaluable contribution to the implementation of the programme of the United Nations Decade of International Law and to the work of the International Law Commission. Equally worthy of note is the Committee's promotion of the wider use of the International Court of Justice, particularly in matters relating to the protection and preservation of the environment.

Lastly, we commend the AALCC for its active participation in the current reform process geared to the strengthening of the role of the United Nations, including improvements in the functioning of the General Assembly. We encourage the Committee to continue with its work in this regard.

Concerning other issues before the Consultative Committee, we note with interest its ongoing work on international instruments adopted by some of the recent United Nations international conferences and its study of the topical issue of national legislation with extraterritorial application. We look forward with great interest to the final conclusions of this study in view of the strong passions the subject has evoked in the United Nations.

It is clear from the report of the Secretary-General that the cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee has proved very beneficial to the two organizations and therefore should be given every encouragement and support so as to strengthen it further. It is our hope that the debate on this item will terminate in a renewed resolve of all Member States of this Organization to extend such encouragement and support.

My delegation is pleased to be a sponsor of draft resolution A/53/L.9, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee".

**The President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/2 of 13 October 1980, I now call on the Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee, Mr. Tang Chengyuan.

**Mr. Tang** (Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee): Allow me, on behalf of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC) to extend to you, Sir, our congratulations on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-third session. We would also like to congratulate the members of your Bureau. We are confident that under your able and adroit stewardship the Assembly will give due consideration to the many items on its agenda and make this session a momentous success.

It is with gratitude that I report to the Assembly on the state of the close cooperation between the United Nations and the AALCC. May I recall that a similar honour and privilege was afforded at the fifty-first session, and that the General Assembly on that occasion requested the United Nations Secretary-General to submit, at its fifty-third session, a report on the cooperation between the two organizations. That report is now before the General Assembly in document A/53/306. I would like to congratulate Secretary-General Kofi Annan for this comprehensive report and to commend it to the General Assembly.

The AALCC, which began with a modest membership of seven States when it was constituted in November 1956, today has 44 members embracing the African and Asian region. It has established itself as a major forum for international cooperation, and its work programme has accordingly been suitably oriented to meet challenges posed by contemporary international society in general and the needs of an expanding membership embracing the two continents of Asia and Africa in particular.

Last year witnessed the opening of a new chapter in the history of the Committee, when a special session of the Committee decided that its permanent headquarters

would be in New Delhi. That momentous decision was made feasible by the generous offer of the Government of India and by the generous gesture of the Government of Qatar.

In the years since the Committee was constituted, and in particular since it was accorded permanent observer status in 1980, its work in support of the United Nations has been predominantly aimed at rendering assistance to the AALCC member Governments in their consideration of the agenda items before the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly. The secretariat has also endeavoured to furnish assistance in the economic and humanitarian fields through the preparation of briefs and studies. This reflects the inclusion of certain items and topics under consideration by the United Nations in the work programme of the AALCC.

Yet another significant aspect of the AALCC's work in support of the United Nations consists of the efforts made to strengthen the United Nations by promoting the ratification and implementation of major international instruments and through such initiatives as the wider use of the International Court of Justice for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Following the conclusion of a formal cooperation agreement with the United Nations in May 1987, periodic consultations have taken place on matters of common concern between successive Secretaries-General and other relevant senior officers of the two organizations. The AALCC has also concluded formal cooperation agreements with a number of United Nations bodies and specialized agencies: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Maritime Organization, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research. The AALCC also maintains close links with other bodies and agencies, such as the International Court of Justice, the International Law Commission (ILC), the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The secretariat is negotiating a cooperation agreement with the World Intellectual Property Organization.

May I recall in this regard that during the 1960s the AALCC was among the first regional organizations to study the matter of the legality of nuclear weapons. During the 1970s, when the law of the sea and the question of a new international economic order were in the forefront, the AALCC made its contribution by being instrumental in evolving the concept of archipelagic States and exclusive economic zones.

Earlier in this decade, when the General Assembly decided to convene a conference on environment and development, the AALCC secretariat involved itself as extensively as its resources permitted, with the preparatory phase of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The involvement of the AALCC with the United Nations Decade of International Law is too well known to need recounting before this Assembly.

More recently, following the adoption by the ILC of a draft statute for an international criminal court, in the General Assembly the AALCC was actively involved in the process culminating in the convening of a United Nations Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court. The secretariat prepared an overview of the draft Statute of the International Criminal Court, prepared by the Preparatory Committee, and was represented at the Conference in Rome.

The AALCC has often been among the first regional bodies to study current legal developments of concern to the developing countries. Last year, the AALCC was among the first to consider the item entitled "Extraterritorial application of national legislation: sanctions against third parties". The item was considered at the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh sessions of the AALCC, held in Tehran in May 1997 and New Delhi in April 1998, respectively. The matter was also discussed by a group of experts, which met in January 1998, and I report with a degree of satisfaction that the secretariat of the Committee has published the proceedings of that meeting, together with the papers presented there.

The AALCC, in response to the call of the General Assembly, organized a special meeting on reservations to treaties to consider the preliminary conclusions on the reservations to normative multilateral treaties, including human rights treaties. A report of that special meeting was thereafter submitted to the Chairman of the International Law Commission during the course of its recently concluded fiftieth session. Allow me to state in this regard that we deeply cherish our ties of cooperation, both with this body as well as with the International Law Commission.

During the years since its establishment, the AALCC has endeavoured to make its modest contribution

to the attainment of the objectives and goals relevant to its sphere of competence. In the process, it has established a symbiotic relationship with a number of organs and agencies of the United Nations. I should like, on behalf of the AALCC, to extend our assurances that the Committee will continue to support the work and activities of the United Nations bodies and to lend its cooperation towards the prevalence of the rule of law in international relations.

The Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee is proud of its record of cooperative arrangements with the United Nations in our common endeavours. We shall continue to strive to fortify this cooperation and to strengthen the international legal order. We firmly believe that the international legal order must affirm such principles and norms of inter-State relations as the sovereign equality of States; non-interference in the internal affairs of other States; the non-use of force; the peaceful settlement of disputes; pacta sunt servanda; respect for human rights; the right to development; the protection and preservation of the environment of the global commons; and the principle of the common heritage of mankind.

Finally, permit me to state that a report on cooperation between the United Nations and the AALCC, the resolution of this body on the subject and my statement before this body will be placed before the AALCC at its thirty-eighth session, scheduled to be held in Accra, Ghana, from 29 March to 2 April 1999. Permit me to take this opportunity to extend to all a cordial invitation to participate in that session of the AALCC.

I thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor and I also thank representatives here for the patient hearing that they have given me.

**The President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I am pleased to announce that, since the introduction of draft resolution A/53/L.9, the following countries have become cosponsors: Australia, Cyprus, Malaysia and New Zealand.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/53/L.9.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

*Draft resolution A/53/L.9 was adopted* (resolution 53/14).

**The President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 22?

*It was so decided.*

**Agenda item 34**

**Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/53/435)**

**Draft resolution (A/53/L.14)**

**The President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call on the representative of Kazakhstan to introduce draft resolution A/53/L.14.

**Mrs. Arystanbekova** (Kazakhstan): As a representative of the State which has held the chairmanship of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) since May this year, I consider it a great honour to be addressing the General Assembly on the agenda item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization" on behalf of the 10 States members of ECO. I should also like, on their behalf, to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for the detailed report, contained in document A/53/435, prepared on the subject under discussion. In our view, this document demonstrates clearly and sufficiently fully the increased volume and main areas of cooperation between the two organizations and defines the prospects for its expansion and intensification.

The ECO member countries attach great importance to the development of regional cooperation. In our view, the trend currently under way in the world to strengthen and expand regional cooperation is an integral part of the overall process of globalization and creates both the necessary conditions for the increased well-being of the populations of the countries of the region and the prerequisites for the progressive development of the world economy as a whole.

The United Nations and its specialized agencies, programmes and funds can play and are playing an important and often universal role in promoting the development of regional and interregional cooperation. The United Nations makes a major contribution to defining promising spheres and potentials for the

development of regional and interregional cooperation, and also in creating the necessary conditions for making it more active. In this respect, the work of the regional commissions of the United Nations, including the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), which are actively promoting cooperation between the main subregional organizations in the Asia and Pacific and European regions, deserves to be particularly singled out.

As is indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, active cooperation between ECO and ESCAP started in 1993 with the signature of a memorandum of understanding based on the Treaty of Izmir and the terms of reference of ESCAP. Currently, a project is being implemented in ESCAP to strengthen subregional economic cooperation in trade and investment among the south-western States members of the Commission, aimed at assisting ECO countries in exploiting new trade and investment opportunities provided by the progressive development of infrastructure in the ECO region. The prospects for intensifying technical cooperation between ECO and ESCAP are also being studied in relation to the development of a subregional database on trade and investment, strengthening of inter-subregional financial linkages, institution- and capacity-building and strengthening the potential of the organization, and also in relation to trade policy.

We greatly appreciate the work of ESCAP and the ECE on the development of the United Nations special programme for the four Central Asian countries that are members of ECO, the aim of which is to assist the States of the region in developing and intensifying their mutual cooperation, promoting economic growth and achieving effective integration into the world economy. The Declaration on the special programme for the economies of Central Asia, signed in March this year, also defines spheres of cooperation that are vitally important for the countries of the region, such as the development of transport infrastructure, rational and effective use of Central Asia's energy and water resources and cooperation in relation to the development of ways of delivering hydrocarbons to world markets.

In view of the priority significance of reliable and effective functioning of ground transport and the establishment of an appropriate transport infrastructure for the economic integration of the ECO countries, seven of which are landlocked, one of the priorities for our region remains cooperation between ECO, ESCAP and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in the development of the transport sector. An important and constructive role in providing assistance in solving this problem, as well as in other spheres, including increasing trade efficiency, the development of data processing and strengthening of the potential of the ECO secretariat, is played by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Since 1997 UNDP has been providing financial support for a joint ECO/UNDP project to grant assistance to the ECO member countries in increasing trade efficiency and developing economic cooperation.

Convincing evidence of the progressive movement towards expansion and intensification of cooperation between ECO and UNDP was the signing in New York at the beginning of this month of a project on technical and financial assistance from UNDP to increase the effectiveness of the work of the ECO secretariat. This project provides for comprehensive assistance by UNDP to the process of training and advanced training of the staff of the ECO secretariat, and also for assistance in providing it with technical equipment.

We express our satisfaction at the progressive development of cooperation between the United Nations system and ECO, and we call on the relevant specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations to further expand and intensify their cooperation with the Economic Cooperation Organization in various areas of development.

The Economic Cooperation Organization, which brings together 10 States with a total population of more than 300 million people, is a promising and dynamically developing organization. It possesses considerable potential both for the expansion of trade and economic, humanitarian and cultural links in our region and for the development of interregional communication. The Declaration and other documents adopted at the most recent ECO summit — the fifth summit — in Almaty in May this year create good conditions for the further intensification of cooperation and the establishment of a favourable trade and investment climate in our region, in which both the member countries of the organization and many States of Europe and Asia are equally interested. We wish to note with satisfaction that over the period that has elapsed since the establishment of ECO, the States members of the organization have achieved significant progress in such important spheres of activity as trade, the development of communications, of ground, sea and air transport systems and of a network of oil and gas pipelines and also in the spheres of energy supply and

information exchange. Fuller and more effective utilization of the existing potential of ECO will certainly be beneficial both to the countries located in our region and to the States located outside it.

On behalf of the States members of ECO, I submit for consideration by the General Assembly draft resolution A/53/L.14, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization. The draft notes the level of cooperation achieved between the two Organizations and contains provisions aimed at further developing and intensifying the cooperation between the United Nations and ECO. In the course of consultations on the draft resolution we sought to take into account all the comments and proposals received from the delegations of interested countries.

The sponsors of the draft resolution call on the delegations of States Members of the United Nations to adopt by consensus draft resolution A/53/L.14, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization, submitted under agenda item 34.

**Mr. Nejad Hosseinian** (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, let me thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his report on the issue of cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and also extend my sincere appreciation to Mr. Onder Ozar, Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization, and his colleagues for their endeavours to strengthen the secretariat of ECO and to expand cooperation with regional, multilateral and international bodies and organizations, in particular the United Nations system.

The process of globalization seems to be an undeniable fact of our collective life today, and for the past decade or so it has made itself felt to different degrees, in different forms and in different arenas of the national life of societies. We are all cognizant of the fact that powerful transnational forces are at work reshaping the key features of world markets in capital, goods, services, labour and technology. Likewise, we are aware that the twin process of globalization and liberalization have expanded and deepened the mutual interdependence of societies, which have, in turn, increased the potential for international interaction and cooperation.

In such a global environment, the real world is perceived as increasingly borderless, and the creation of regional economic groupings is a real approach by developing countries to integrate themselves smoothly into the world economy. In fact, by lowering tariff and other trade barriers and by eliminating impediments to capital flows in the regional grouping arrangements, developing countries prepare themselves and establish necessary capacities for integration into the world economy and for addressing existing and future global challenges.

The main objectives of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), which was established in 1985 and whose current membership numbers 10 countries, are removal of trade barriers within the ECO region, expansion of intraregional and interregional trade and ensuring the gradual and smooth integration of the economies of ECO member States into the world economy and their participation in the globalization process. The situation of ECO member States and their existing domestic socio-economic conditions necessitate the extension of cooperation for utilizing their potential and for realizing opportunities with all international and multilateral bodies, in particular the United Nations system. At the very centre of the region's potential are its oil and gas reserves and rich mineral resources, which provide all the ingredients for a sound industrial base. The region also has considerable agricultural potential, with its vast lands accommodating both livestock and grain production. Economic, social and environmental challenges in the region are also enormous. All new members of ECO are at the stage of transition from central planning to market-oriented economies. Since these States are also landlocked countries, strengthening the transit infrastructure at the regional level is an urgent need for the expansion of trade, increasing investment opportunities and their integration into the world economy. Protection of the environment, in particular in the Caspian Sea, Aral Sea and some other regions in Central Asia, is among the major challenges before littoral States and concerned countries in the Organization. The region also continues to be one of the regions most vulnerable to the illicit cultivation and production, trafficking and consumption of narcotic drugs.

We firmly believe that the United Nations system, as a multidimensional mechanism, should play an effective role in the process of strengthening ECO so that it can be a more prosperous and functional regional organization. The United Nations funds and programmes and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific have increased their consultations and cooperation with ECO and its associated bodies to assist its member States in capacity-building to enable them to address these challenges. The United Nations

Development Programme has also contributed to the capacity-building of the ECO secretariat, as well as to trade efficiency, economic cooperation and resource complementarities among ECO member States through bilateral and trilateral cooperation mechanisms. The cooperation between the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and ECO is quite extensive, particularly in sharing analytical and technical information and ideas, expanding relations among their subsidiary bodies in various fields and collaboration on the issues of transit and transportation and other related matters. Other United Nations funds and programmes have also been engaged in cooperation and consultation in areas such as population, food security, agricultural and industrial development and controlling narcotic drugs.

Despite these admirable endeavours, the demands for promoting such cooperation at the regional level are high. The restructuring of the Economic Cooperation Organization requires the assistance of the specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system and of the relevant international financial institutions. These contributions should be geared towards promoting the socio-economic infrastructure of the member States of ECO. The opportunities for cooperation in the fields of trade, investment, energy, environment, industry and agriculture are undeniably vast and need no further elaboration.

The major challenge for economic prosperity and sustainable development in the region is outside pressure for reshaping the rational economic relations among regional countries and their commercial relations with the rest of the world. Viable and feasible routes for export of oil and raw materials have been halted by outside pressure. An inevitable result of this would be expensive substitute routes with adverse environmental effects. These policies adversely affect regional cooperation and will hinder the efforts of countries of the region for expeditious integration into the world economy.

I cannot conclude without referring to the menace of illicit cultivation and trafficking of narcotic drugs in the region. We are of the view that intensive regional cooperation to combat this hazardous problem is vital for socio-economic advancement and human development in the region. The establishment of a Drug Control Unit in the ECO is a positive step towards the realization of this objective. In this context, cooperation between ECO, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and other intergovernmental and international organizations, especially in supporting transit States in their efforts to halt the inflow and trafficking of illicit drugs to consuming countries, is imperative. Moreover, the role of the respective bodies of the United Nations in helping States address socio-economic and human development challenges resulting from the drug menace in the region should be strengthened.

Allow me to close by expressing our wish for the adoption of the draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization" by a unanimous decision of the Assembly.

**The President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker on the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/53/L.14.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

*Draft resolution A/53/L.14 was adopted* (resolution 53/15).

**The President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 34?

*It was so decided.*

**Agenda item 26**

**Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/53/430)**

**Draft resolution (A/53/L.13)**

**The President** *(interpretation from Spanish):* I call on the representative of Qatar to introduce draft resolution A/53/L.13.

**Mr. Al-Nasser** (Qatar) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The State of Qatar, as current Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), has the honour and privilege of introducing the draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference", contained in document A/53/L.13 of 27 October 1998, on behalf of

the 56 States members and six observers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

At the very outset, we would like to convey our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report, contained in document A/53/430, submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of General Assembly resolution 52/4 of 22 October 1997.

On 1 October 1998, the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, addressed the annual coordination meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the OIC, held at United Nations Headquarters. At the coordination meeting, it was unanimously agreed to admit Guyana as the fifty-sixth State member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and to permit Thailand to participate as an observer. The ministers also reviewed the international situation, with particular attention to the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Jammu and Kashmir; Afghanistan; Somalia; the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan; the consequences of Iraq's occupation of Kuwait; and the situation pertaining to the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Security Council resolutions 731 (1992) and 883 (1993). In addition, the ministers discussed the question of United Nations reform.

Furthermore, the Secretary-General of the United Nations attended the Eighth Summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which was held at Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, from 9 to 11 December 1997. During the Summit, the Secretary-General conferred with a number of heads of delegation and other senior participants in the Summit, including the OIC Secretary-General, Mr. Azeddine Laraki, as well as the new Chairman of the OIC, President Seyed Mohammad Khatami of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

At the twenty-fifth meeting of Foreign Ministers of the OIC, which was convened at Doha in the State of Qatar from 15 to 19 March 1998, the Secretary-General of the United Nations was represented by his Special Envoy for Afghanistan, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference is satisfied at its active participation in the work of the United Nations with the aim of implementing the purposes and principles of the Charter. It is gratified by the close cooperation between the two organizations during the period since the adoption of resolution 52/4 of 22 October 1997. Over the past year there have been many cases of the two organizations undertaking joint, mutually reinforcing efforts. A new political dimension has been added to the consultations on political issues of interest to both organizations, including cooperation with a view to settling the dispute in Afghanistan. This demonstrates the great potential of concrete joint cooperation between the two organizations in the field of peacemaking.

In fact, since its establishment, the Organization of the Islamic Conference has been firmly committed to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

There has been a great expansion in the scope of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, especially in the political, social and economic, humanitarian, cultural and technical fields. The two organizations are jointly seeking solutions to global problems relating to international peace and security, disarmament, decolonization, the right of self-determination, human rights and economic development.

The Islamic group hopes that the Permanent Observer Mission of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations will be granted diplomatic status by the host country, in accordance with Article 105 of the Charter and with the Headquarters Agreement concluded with the host country, because the Mission represents an international organization that the General Assembly has invited to participate in its sessions with observer status. This would facilitate its work in a manner similar to that which obtains in Geneva. This status would undoubtedly contribute to furthering the work of the Mission, and would enable it to achieve what is expected of it in the service of the joint endeavours of the two organizations and their subsidiary bodies.

I turn now to draft resolution A/53/L.13 which I have the honour to introduce. It describes not only the multifaceted, concrete cooperation between the two organizations. It also calls for continued close cooperation. The substance of the draft resolution is identical to that of texts adopted on this agenda item at previous sessions.

The preambular part of the draft resolution takes into account the desire of both organizations to continue their common search for solutions to global problems. It also recalls Articles of the Charter of the United Nations that encourage the activities through regional cooperation for the promotion of the purposes and principles of the United Nations. The preamble also notes the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations,

its funds and programmes and specialized agencies and the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its specialized and affiliated institutions. It further notes the encouraging progress made in the 10 priority areas of cooperation, as well as in the identification of other areas of cooperation. It also expresses the conviction that the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system and the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its organs and institutions contributes to the promotion of the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Moreover, it notes with appreciation the determination of both organizations to strengthen further the existing cooperation by developing specific proposals in the designated priority areas of cooperation, as well as in the political field. The OIC welcomes the results of the general meeting of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its subsidiary organs and specialized and affiliated institutions, held at Geneva from 13 to 15 July 1998.

The OIC also welcomes the high-level meeting, convened by the Secretary-General on 28 and 29 July 1998, of regional organizations, including the OIC, with which the United Nations has cooperated in preventive diplomacy and the establishment and maintenance of international peace.

In the operative paragraphs, the Organization of the Islamic Conference takes note with satisfaction of the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/430) of 24 September 1998, and takes note also of the conclusions and recommendations adopted by the general meeting of the secretariats and representatives of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its specialized and affiliated institutions. It notes with satisfaction the active participation of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in the work of the United Nations towards the realization of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

In addition, it calls on the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to continue to cooperate in their common search for solutions to global problems, such as questions relating to international peace and security, disarmament, self-determination, decolonization, fundamental human rights, social and economic development, and technical cooperation.

Moreover, the General Assembly welcomes the efforts of the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations in areas of common concern and to review the ways and means for enhancing the mechanisms of such cooperation.

The General Assembly welcomes with appreciation the increased cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference in the field of peacemaking and preventive diplomacy and takes note of the effective cooperation between the two organizations in the search for a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in Afghanistan. It welcomes the efforts of the two organizations to strengthen information exchange, coordination and cooperation between them in areas of mutual interest in the political field and their ongoing consultations with a view to further developing the mechanisms of such cooperation.

The General Assembly also welcomes the periodic high-level meetings between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, as well as between senior secretariat officials of the two organizations, and encourages their participation in important meetings of the two organizations. The General Assembly encourages the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system to continue to expand their cooperation with the subsidiary organs and specialized and affiliated institutions of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, particularly by negotiating cooperation agreements, and invites them to multiply the contacts and meetings of the focal points for cooperation in priority areas of interest to the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The General Assembly urges the United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system, especially the lead agencies, to provide increased technical and other forms of assistance to the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its subsidiary organs and specialized and affiliated institutions in order to enhance cooperation. It expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his continued efforts to strengthen cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system and the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its subsidiary organs and specialized and affiliated institutions to serve the mutual interests of the two organizations in the political, economic, social, cultural and humanitarian fields.

The draft resolution requests the Secretary-General of the United Nations to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session on the state of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and it notes that the General Assembly would include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fourth session the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference".

On behalf of the member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the observers, I wish to ask the members of the General Assembly to support the draft resolution and to facilitate its adoption by consensus, as has been the case in past years.

**Mr. Nejad Hosseinian** (Islamic Republic of Iran): Let me first express my delegation's appreciation and gratitude to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his report on "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference". The report reflects the areas and issues of interest to both Organizations in the political, economic and cultural fields. A great deal has been achieved, but much remains to be done. The Secretary-General has touched upon a number of areas on which solid ground for cooperation has already been established.

The participation of the Secretary-General in the Eighth Islamic Summit, held in Tehran in December 1997, was regarded as a manifestation of the excellent relationship and useful cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). In his address to the Islamic Summit, the Secretary-General duly referred to this cooperation and eloquently emphasized that through the OIC,

> "the world understands the desires and demands of over one fifth of the world's population, from all continents. That is why the partnership between the OIC and the United Nations is so important. That is why it holds such promise for all the peoples of the United Nations." (*SG/SM/6418, p. 2*)

We are indeed pleased to note the remark of the Secretary-General in his report that

> "During the period under review, cooperation on political matters intensified between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, in particular with regard to ongoing peacemaking efforts." (*A/53/430, para. 7*)

The close cooperation between the two organizations includes cooperation on the peace process in Tajikistan, on various stages of the crisis in Afghanistan and on a number of other issues around the world.

The members of the OIC are firmly of the view that effective, constructive and meaningful participation of Islamic countries in the management of international affairs is essential for maintaining peace and security in the world. Thus, they are determined to make positive contributions to international peace and security and to sustainable growth and development. To this end, they have, at various gatherings of the OIC, considered areas of interest and importance that require collective efforts. Decisions and resolutions were adopted at the Tehran Summit and at the twenty-fifth ministerial meeting in Doha, Qatar, last March on numerous issues, most of which appear also on the agenda of the United Nations.

*Mr. Mangoaela (Lesotho), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Furthermore, the Islamic countries have declared their strict adherence to cooperation for the protection and preservation of the environment, combating terrorism and illicit trafficking in drugs, as well as respect for international law in general and the United Nations Charter in particular. They have also expressed their desire to cooperate with the United Nations on issues of significance, such as human rights and disarmament. The proposed meeting between the OIC and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights would further forge a spirit of cooperation and understanding on the important issue of human rights.

Children's issues, as the Secretary-General says in his report,

> "continue to retain high visibility on the political agenda in the Islamic world. This manifested itself amply during the eighth OIC Summit at Tehran". (*A/53/430, para. 22*)

The same Summit decided, among other things, to establish an ad hoc committee to develop guidelines to promote dialogue, cooperation and confidence among its member States. The first meeting of the committee, which was held in Tehran last May, managed to produce a comprehensive document which indeed is reflective of different ways and means of promoting the dialogue, cooperation and confidence also cherished by the United Nations Charter.

The issues of common interest to the two organizations are by no means confined to what I have attempted to elaborate on here. There exist common desires and aims in areas which need to be further developed, and to this end new avenues for better understanding and strengthened cooperation in various fields should be explored. We are pleased to note that the report of the Secretary-General is promising in its recognition that there has been broad agreement on the value of regular political consultations between the two organizations.

I wish to close by reaffirming the pledge of my Government, as current Chairman of the OIC, to gear our efforts towards the promotion and strengthening of the cooperation between the two organizations.

**Mr. Vural** (Turkey): Today is the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Turkish Republic, and as I will be the host of the reception to which we will welcome representatives in a few minutes, I would like to thank the representative of Pakistan for offering me his place on the list of speakers.

I will be very brief. I would like to welcome the report presented by the Secretary-General to the fifty-third session of the General Assembly on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. It gives evidence of a most welcome deepening of relations between the two organizations through high-level contacts, regular consultations and technical meetings. My delegation supports this process and calls for its continuation.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) covers a vast geographical area and an extensive population dispersed over four continents. It represents a rich diversity of cultures and political systems, taking as a common denominator the heritage of Islam, which literally derives from the word "peace". Through its members, the OIC has a heritage of profound historical and political experience, which enables it to be an important instrument of peace and stability in the world.

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations has proved to be an indispensable dimension of the international system. The Organization of the Islamic Conference is one of these major regional organizations that can contribute to and benefit from the work of the United Nations.

In view of all this, my delegation supports the draft resolution presented by the State of Qatar, which calls for the enhancement of cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC. We hope that such cooperation will further contribute to the global efforts for peace and international solidarity.

**Ms. Syahrudin** (Indonesia): I should like to begin by expressing my delegation's deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for the lucid and comprehensive report he has presented on the state of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), contained in document A/53/430. My delegation would also like to acknowledge the important contributions to the report made by the various entities of the United Nations system.

It is indeed a source of particular satisfaction to my delegation to note the many important cooperative activities that have taken place between the two organizations over the past year in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/4 of 22 October 1997, which Indonesia had the honour to introduce last year in its capacity as Chairman of the twenty-fourth meeting of Foreign Ministers of the OIC.

The delegation of Indonesia welcomes the intensification of cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC in the political field and has noted the broad agreement that exists on the value of regular consultations between these two organizations. We are mindful of the important process of regular consultations between the secretariats of the two organizations regarding the situations in Somalia and Tajikistan. With regard to the conflict in Afghanistan, we have noted the significance of the joint United Nations/OIC peacemaking mission to that country and the neighbouring countries earlier this year, as well as the subsequent series of meetings of the Afghan parties held under joint United Nations and OIC auspices. Indeed, we see merit in the observation by the co-chairmanship by the two organizations on the valuable potential of concrete joint cooperation in the field of peacemaking beyond the conflict in Afghanistan.

In the economic sphere, the imbalances and inequities of international economic relations continue to bear heavily on the OIC member countries, thereby underlining the importance of an effective and efficient functioning of the broad range of institutional and operational instruments which exist within the OIC for the conduct of economic cooperation. Above all, however, they underscore the imperative need for closer cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC in

the economic and social fields, including between the two organizations' specialized agencies and institutions.

In this regard, my delegation is heartened by the encouraging progress in the 10 priority areas of cooperation discussed in the general meeting between the representatives of the secretariats of the two organizations earlier this year. We look forward to the development of specific proposals in areas such as science and technology, trade and development, technical cooperation among Islamic countries, assistance to refugees, food security and agriculture, education and eradication of illiteracy, human resources development and the environment.

Finally, Indonesia would like to join Qatar, Chairman of the twenty-fifth meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, in recommending the adoption by consensus of the draft resolution before the Assembly. For, indeed, its objective of strengthening the bonds between the two organizations — their shared commitment to peace and security and social and economic development — is one which deserves the continued support of Member States.

**Mr. Ka** (Senegal) (*interpretation from French*): The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) brings together more than 50 member States representing one fifth of the world's population, spread over nearly all the continents. This nearly universal representativity confers on the OIC duties and obligations on a global scale, and it is therefore quite natural that it shares the purposes and principles of the United Nations as well as the same concerns. This explains the great importance that OIC member States attach to cooperation between the OIC and the United Nations within the framework of a mutually beneficial partnership.

This political will to consolidate, reinforce and expand cooperation has enabled the two organizations to establish appropriate machinery for consultations and to pool their efforts in the search for solutions to the crises which the Islamic Ummah is now experiencing.

Among such crises is the question of Palestine, which, having been at the origin of the founding of the OIC, is at the forefront. My country, which is chairing the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, can attest to the vitality of the relationship between the two organizations on this issue.

Elsewhere, the conflicts now raging in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and, very recently, in Kosovo, which could constitute serious threats to the peace and security of the regions involved, have provided the two organizations an opportunity for working together in close cooperation to strengthen the impact of their joint efforts to search for and implement means of lessening tensions in those parts of the world.

The maintenance of peace, conflict management and the search for political solutions to conflicts are not the sole framework for cooperation between the OIC and the United Nations. Increasingly, the two organizations have been building and strengthening cooperation all over, covering the enormous and significant areas of economic and social development, the environment and refugees, to name only a few.

*Mr. Filippi Balestra (San Marino), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

In this context, the general meeting of representatives of the secretariats of United Nations bodies and the OIC, held in Geneva on 13 and 15 July 1998, is of particular importance.

It is also in this context that we welcome the fact that, the United Nations Secretary-General attended the eighth OIC Summit in Tehran in December 1997. That was the first time a United Nations Secretary-General had attended an OIC Summit, and his presence will have the effect of opening up new prospects for consolidating and expanding bonds of cooperation between the United Nations and the Islamic Conference.

Our world today is going through an era of numerous serious challenges that require determination and a shared will on the part of the entire international community. Here, cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference is an appropriate response. Such cooperation must be sustained and encouraged, and the adoption by consensus of the draft resolution before us, as contained in document A/53/L.13, would be a great contribution to that end.

**Mr. Shahid** (Bangladesh): The Bangladesh delegation finds the report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), as contained in document A/53/430, useful in terms of understanding the level and depth of the relationship between these two important organizations.

We are indeed encouraged by the growing relationship between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference during the last few years, particularly during the past year, in a number of areas. We note with particular interest the cooperation between these two organizations in the fields of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and conflict resolution. In this connection, my delegation commends the joint initiatives of the United Nations and the OIC with regard to Afghanistan and Tajikistan and the exchange of views on other areas with potential for conflict.

We would, however, like to point out that, while we welcome initiative from the OIC in the peace and security area, we firmly believe that the United Nations must share the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. The efforts of such organizations as the OIC should be complementary to United Nations efforts, not a substitute.

The root of conflict lies in poverty, deprivation and discrimination. It is unfortunate that, although much desired, not enough attention has been devoted to addressing the challenges of poverty. We believe that a major focus of cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC should be to address these challenges through all available means. We are happy to note that a number of organizations of the United Nations system have entered into collaborative activities with OIC, devoting their attention and resources to promoting better living conditions in the member countries of the OIC. We welcome such initiatives and encourage them, as they meaningfully contribute to addressing the challenges of development. We are particularly pleased about the recent cooperation agreement signed between OIC and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to promote activities relating to women's health in the OIC countries.

Bangladesh is happy to note that the Government of Switzerland has accorded full diplomatic facilities to the OIC representative in Geneva. My delegation has noted the views expressed by the Permanent Observer of the Mission of the OIC to the United Nations on the formalization of the status of the organization by the host Government and we believe that this issue deserves favourable consideration.

**Mr. Kamal** (Pakistan): The report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), under review in the General Assembly today, epitomizes the fact that effective cooperation between the international organizations could advance our collective goals of peace and prosperity.

Since formalizing cooperation in 1978, the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference have diversified mutual collaboration in a wide range of areas, including the political, cultural, humanitarian, trade and development, science and technology, education, environment and a number of other areas. The strengthened cooperation in recent years in the area of preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution has yielded positive dividends. Their mutually supportive roles and efforts in some of the most egregious conflicts of modern times have received wide approbation and international recognition. Particular mention must be made of their historic collaboration in pursuing reconciliation and the peaceful resolution of conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Palestine, the Middle East, Jammu and Kashmir, and Afghanistan.

The United Nations/OIC peacemaking mission to Afghanistan and a number of neighbouring countries during the period from 20 March to 15 April 1998 was a vital initiative that marked a new dimension in their cooperation. The Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General and the OIC Permanent Observer must be commended for their untiring and determined efforts. The report of the Secretary-General rightly mentions that, though this joint mission did not achieve any lasting results, it underlined the valuable potential of concrete joint cooperation in the field of peacemaking beyond the conflict in Afghanistan.

We feel encouraged by the substantial progress made recently by the latest United Nations/OIC joint initiative, undertaken in pursuance of the points of common understanding reached at the ministerial meeting of the "Six plus Two" group on Afghanistan in New York. The Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ambassador Brahimi, and the Special Representative of the OIC Secretary-General, Ambassador Ibrahim Saleh Bakr, must be commended for their resolute efforts and significant success in defusing the tensions on the borders between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

We also welcome the positive gestures of the Taliban leadership, in deference to the demands of the joint United Nations/OIC mission, to allow the return of the remaining dead bodies of the Iranian diplomats; the unconditional release of all Iranian prisoners; cooperation with the investigations into the killing of the diplomats;

assistance in the investigations into the reported mass killings and mass graves; and the return of the United Nations agencies and the international humanitarian organizations to resume their work in Afghanistan. It is our hope that the United Nations/OIC joint mission will succeed in its efforts to encourage a sustained dialogue between Iran and Afghanistan.

It is a matter of concern to all of us that the OIC Permanent Observer Mission has continued to function in New York for over 20 years without the formal recognition of the host Government. The OIC Mission is being denied the privileges and immunities which are essential for performing its multifarious responsibilities. The Mission must be accorded all the required facilities, as envisaged in Article 105 of the United Nations Charter, and the relevant provisions of the United Nations Headquarters agreement with the host country.

I may mention here that the Government of Pakistan has extended full diplomatic facilities to the Office of the OIC Permanent Representative to Afghanistan, based in Islamabad, which have facilitated its work, particularly the joint United Nations-OIC cooperation. Similarly, the Government of Switzerland has extended necessary privileges to the OIC Observer Mission in Geneva, facilitating its effective cooperation with the United Nations and the specialized agencies based in Europe. There is no reason why similar treatment could not be accorded to the Organization of the Islamic Conference in New York. This unfortunate anomaly must be rectified immediately, so that the OIC can function effectively and fulfil its tasks meaningfully.

In conclusion, I would like to express our hope that the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference will continue to flourish in all spheres in promoting the common goals of the international community.

**Mr. Snoussi** (Morocco) (*interpretation from French*): Allow me at the outset to express my sincere thanks to the Secretary-General for his report, submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of General Assembly resolution 52/4 of 22 October 1997, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which appears in document A/53/430.

I also wish to express the satisfaction of my delegation and its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his special interest in the work of the OIC. This was borne out by his participation in the coordinating meeting of OIC Foreign Ministers, held in New York in parallel with the work of the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, and in the Eighth OIC Summit, which was held at Tehran from 9 to 11 December 1997.

I should like to take this opportunity to warmly thank the Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar, Mr. Nasser Abdulaziz Al-Nassir, for introducing the draft resolution on this item in document A/53/L.13.

Over the years, and since the cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC became institutionalized, the bonds of cooperation between the two organizations have steadily developed. The report of the Secretary-General clearly reflects the various aspects of the cooperation in the period under consideration.

We welcome the commendable efforts by the two organizations to step up their cooperation in all areas of common interest. In this spirit, we are pleased to note their resolve to strengthen further the ties of cooperation in the political domain, especially with regard to the peaceful resolution of conflicts and in the areas of coordination and economic and social development. In this regard, Morocco welcomes their joint efforts to help resolve conflicts in countries members of the OIC, as in the cases of Somalia, Tajikistan and Afghanistan, and encourages them to continue their efforts in that area.

Morocco is pleased to note the general meeting of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and of the OIC and its specialized institutions, which took place in Geneva from 13 to 15 July 1998, and hopes that the programme of work for the period 1998-1999 will be implemented and yield the expected results. We are pleased to welcome the results of various aspects of the economic and social cooperation, as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General.

Despite all these positive aspects, much remains to be done, and the situation of a great many Muslims in the Middle East, the Balkans and Afghanistan calls for particular attention on our part and requires that we redouble our efforts so that practical and lasting solutions can be identified and implemented to enable the populations of those regions to live in peace.

If the cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC is to yield the results for which we are all hoping, we believe that the two organizations must be endowed with the means necessary for them to fulfil their mandates in a satisfactory manner. To that end, we

believe that it is essential to grant the Office of the Permanent Observer for the OIC in New York the facilities that would undoubtedly assist it in fulfilling its obligations in favourable conditions.

That having been said, we hope that the adoption of the draft resolution before us today will make it possible to enter a new phase of strengthened links of cooperation and coordination between the two organizations aimed at achieving the noble objectives articulated in their respective Charters.

**Mr. Rastan** (Malaysia): My delegation is very pleased to speak on this agenda item. We are especially pleased that since it was first considered by the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session, significant progress has been achieved in the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). This progress is well reflected in the Secretary-General's report in document A/53/430. Malaysia fully supports further efforts to strengthen the fruitful cooperation that already exists between the two organizations. We are convinced that both would find further mutual benefit through increased cooperation. The OIC certainly can do a lot to complement the United Nations in the pursuit of many common goals.

The OIC was founded to strengthen unity and solidarity among the Islamic Ummah, or community. Malaysia is happy to be a member of the OIC and to have been associated with its activities since its establishment some 30 ago. The late Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra, our first Prime Minister, became the first Secretary-General of the OIC. Malaysia has participated in the various OIC summits and other meetings held at the ministerial, senior official and expert levels. We are pleased that the membership of the OIC has increased steadily. As with the membership of the United Nations, countries from various regions of the world make up the membership of the OIC. Malaysia is pleased that Guyana has become the newest member of the OIC and that Thailand has been accepted as an observer. Both countries are active Members of the United Nations. They can surely join others to make important contributions to the work of the OIC, including with respect to the organization's cooperation with the United Nations.

Currently with 56 members, the OIC represents countries which constitute nearly one third of the membership of the United Nations. As an organization, the OIC has contributed and can continue to contribute constructively and positively to many United Nations activities. It shares many common objectives with the United Nations in respect of peace, security and development. Its activities complement and strengthen those of the United Nations in many areas, thus contributing to the promotion and realization of the principles and purposes set out in the Charter of the United Nations.

The Islamic countries today are confronted with the challenges of the modern era. One of those is to present the true image of Islam as a religion of peace. At the Eighth Islamic Summit Conference, in Tehran in December 1997, the Kings, heads of State and heads of Government of the OIC member countries expressed their concern at tendencies to portray Islam as a threat to the world, whereas Islamic civilization is firmly and historically grounded in peaceful coexistence, cooperation and mutual understanding among civilizations. My delegation believes that the United Nations is uniquely placed to bridge the gap between the Islamic countries and the rest of the international community through dialogue and cooperation. Therefore, we believe that the proposal by President Mohammed Khatami of Iran, which calls for the designation of the year 2001 as the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, is indeed timely and should be widely supported. We think the United Nations and the OIC can cooperate meaningfully in achieving the objective of that proposal.

My delegation is fully appreciative of the keen interest shown by the United Nations Secretary-General in the activities of the OIC. The Secretary-General attended the Eighth OIC Summit in Tehran and also addressed the annual coordination meeting of the OIC Foreign Ministers held at United Nations Headquarters in October 1997. We also recall that he sent his representatives to attend the twenty-fifth meeting of the OIC Foreign Ministers, in Doha in March 1998, and the annual coordination meeting of the OIC Foreign Ministers held recently in New York. In his address at the OIC coordination meeting last year, the Secretary-General referred to the United Nations as "our common home". The United Nations and the OIC, while serving in different capacities, indeed serve one common constituency: humanity. Deepening relations and increased cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC would, in the view of my delegation, help both organizations and their member States provide better service to that common constituency.

We believe both organizations can continue to explore new dimensions of cooperation in the field of

peace and security, as well as in other fields. The peacemaking mission to Afghanistan undertaken jointly by the United Nations and OIC last March and April was certainly a step in the right direction. My delegation concurs with the Secretary-General, who stated in his report that the mission underlined the valuable potential of concrete joint cooperation in the field of peacemaking between the United Nations and OIC. We agree that such efforts could be extended beyond the conflict in Afghanistan.

Malaysia believes that a smart partnership could be further developed between the two organizations in complementing each other's activities in the social, cultural and economic fields. In this regard, we welcome the general meeting between the representatives of the United Nations system and the OIC and its specialized institutions held in Geneva last July. We hope that further discussions will be carried out and follow-up action taken on the various items in the agenda, which is quite comprehensive, including on proposals for enhancing the mechanisms of cooperation between the United Nations system and the OIC and its specialized institutions.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the increasing number of cooperative arrangements between the United Nations system and the OIC and its specialized institutions. The Secretary-General's report provides very useful information on the level and extent of cooperation between various United Nations agencies on the one hand, and the OIC and its specialized institutions on the other. For example, we note that the International Fund for Agricultural Development has cooperated with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) in co-financing 14 projects in 11 Islamic countries targeted to assist the most vulnerable of the rural poor. The International Labour Organization has been supportive of national development efforts of individual OIC member States. The United Nations Children's Fund and the OIC, through its specialized institution, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), have rededicated their efforts to ensure the survival, protection and well-being of children in the Islamic world. The United Nations Environment Programme and ISESCO, supported by the IDB and the Faysal Islamic Bank, have launched a joint initiative to hold a series of seminars on the theme of "Environment and Islam: towards an ethical environmental charter". Malaysia supports these activities and others which both the United Nations and the OIC have identified.

My delegation believes that, in the face of the challenges posed by globalization and market liberalization — particularly their negative impact on the economies of the developing countries, many of whom are members of the OIC — the dialogue that has been started between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions could also be extended to include dialogue with the specialized institutions of the OIC, in particular the IDB. Such a dialogue could contribute towards the development of ideas and proposals which would assist the international community in responding to such challenges, including the proposal to revamp the global financial architecture. The OIC may also want to take steps in this direction.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to extend its sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the OIC for their tireless efforts in forging the cooperation between the United Nations and OIC.

**Mr. Tekaya** (Tunisia) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: The United Nations Charter has laid the foundation for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations as evidence of what such cooperation can contribute to crystallize the principles and objectives of the United Nations in different fields.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which is being discussed by the General Assembly, is a vivid example of what can result from cooperation between a regional organization and the United Nations, as attested to by the comprehensive report by the Secretary-General on this subject. This cooperation covers several fields — political, social, humanitarian — within the framework of coordination and consultation, and the two Organizations are attempting to find solutions to problems related to international peace and security, disarmament, self-determination, decolonization, fundamental human rights, economic and social development and technical cooperation.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC has grown in the field of peacekeeping as well as in preventive diplomacy. In this area, consultations between them have been fostered through their joint endeavour to find a peaceful settlement in Afghanistan. It is with satisfaction that we note this and support it as we support all aspects of consultations between the two organizations and of coordination of their efforts relevant to all other problems of common interest.

Furthermore, in the economic and social field, cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC has recorded great progress in the fields of trade, technical cooperation, food security, agriculture, development of human resources and the provision of assistance to refugees, as well as in other fields, of which there are many examples.

Within this framework we call for further technical aid and all other forms of assistance by the United Nations and its relevant specialized agencies to the OIC and the different subsidiary organs in order to consolidate such cooperation. Accordingly, we support the draft resolution before the Assembly on cooperation between the two organizations.

Before concluding, I wish to refer to the importance we attach to having the Office of the Permanent Observer of the OIC in New York be provided with the facilities and the different privileges afforded other observer missions. This would facilitate its ability to carry out its work and responsibilities in the manner expected of it.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 3369 (XXX) of 10 October 1975, I now call upon the Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

**Mr. Lamani** (Organization of the Islamic Conference) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Since this is the first time that I am addressing the General Assembly at its fifty-third session, I should like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Mr. Azzedine Laraki, and on my own behalf, to extend our congratulations to the President on his election. We are confident that his wide experience and his diplomatic skills are the best guarantee that the conduct of the Assembly will be accomplished in an effective and decisive manner. I should also like to express our appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Hennadiy Udovenko, for the success he achieved in steering the work of the fifty-second session.

As we consider agenda item 26, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), I am honoured to review some of the developments that have taken place in this regard in the political, economic, social and humanitarian fields during the period under review.

Both organizations share a commitment to intensifying cooperation and coordination to find solutions to issues of common concern such as peace, security, disarmament, basic human rights, economic and social development and technical cooperation. The report of the Secretary-General which is now before us has highlighted this cooperation. In this regard, may I express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his wise conduct of the work of the Organization and also express our appreciation to the executive heads of the various United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies for their unremitting efforts towards the effective implementation of our joint programmes.

In recognition of the growing needs and common requirements of our member States, General Assembly resolution 52/4 of 22 October 1997 called for the strengthening of cooperation between our two organizations in the political, social, economic and humanitarian fields. The report of the Secretary-General contains a detailed review of these issues. Progress in these efforts was also reviewed at this year's meeting of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which was held at United Nations Headquarters on 29 September 1998, during the current session of the General Assembly.

Earlier, a general meeting on cooperation between representatives of the secretariats of the United Nations system and of the OIC and its specialized institutions had been held at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 13 to 15 July 1998. At that meeting, the results of our joint activities and plans for the next biennium were examined, together with proposals for strengthening mechanisms for cooperation between our two organizations.

Here I want to highlight two examples of our cooperation in the political sphere during the period under review. First, a joint mission to Afghanistan and neighbouring States was organized last March and April, led by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Afghanistan. I had the privilege of participating in that mission on behalf of the OIC. Despite the complexities of the Afghan issue, those efforts helped to open dialogue among the Afghan factions and with neighbouring States. They also paved the way for further coordination and cooperation between the two organizations in the search for viable solutions to this long-standing issue. Regular consultations on this issue have continued between the Secretaries-General of our two organizations; they agreed at their meeting at United Nations Headquarters on 29

September 1998 to dispatch another joint mission to the region, led by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, in view of the recent escalation of tension in the area. There is no doubt that these joint efforts, which are supported and called for by the countries of the region through the recommendations of the 6 + 2 ministerial meeting on Afghanistan, clearly testify to the feasibility of cooperation between the two organizations in the sphere of peacemaking.

As regards the situation in Tajikistan, as the Secretary-General's report indicates, the OIC participated as an observer in the United Nations-sponsored inter-Tajik talks that concluded in 1997 with the signing of the General Agreement. The OIC is a member of the contact group established in connection with the peace process in Tajikistan.

Moreover, consultations continue between the Secretaries-General of the two organizations with regard to other important and urgent issues of common concern, including the question of Palestine, the situation in the Middle East, the Lockerbie issue, the conflict in Somalia, the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, the questions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Sierra Leone, and other matters.

I turn now from the political sphere to our cooperation in the field of economic and social development. Again, as the Secretary-General's report illustrates, progress continues in the areas of technology, trade, development, and technical cooperation among Islamic States, in addition to the questions of assistance to refugees, food security, agriculture, education, fighting illiteracy, investment mechanisms, development of human resources and the environment. Examples of such cooperation are on the increase. In this respect, I shall cite the recent training course for a number of institutions in Africa and the Arab States in food technology and textiles, held at Cairo in cooperation with the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Egyptian Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry. Another example was the signing of a memorandum of understanding earlier in October 1998 by the OIC Secretary-General and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to enhance cooperation in the fields of family education, population census, reproductive health and related questions. Also worth mentioning is our ongoing cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund and other programmes and agencies of the United Nations.

I turn now to the OIC's interest in the matter of United Nations reform. OIC member States have a direct and vital stake in determining the outcome of those reforms. This was affirmed by the most recent annual coordination meeting of Foreign Ministers of OIC member States, held in New York on 1 October 1998.

His Excellency the Permanent Representative of Qatar, in his capacity as Chairman of the Islamic Group, has just introduced a draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which is before the Assembly in document A/53/L.13 of 27 October 1998. I hope it will be adopted by consensus. I would like to draw attention to two paragraphs of the operative part because of their importance.

First, paragraph 4, which requests the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to continue to cooperate in their common search for solutions to global problems, such as questions relating to international peace and security, disarmament, self-determination, fundamental human rights, social and economic development, and technical cooperation. There is no doubt that this paragraph reflects the will of the General Assembly to involve the OIC in diplomatic and mediation efforts to find solutions for a number of issues of common concern.

Secondly, paragraph 10 urges the United Nations and other organizations of the United Nations system, especially the lead agencies, to provide increased technical and other forms of assistance to the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its subsidiary organs and specialized and affiliated institutions in order to enhance cooperation. We would welcome such support, which would strengthen our capacity to help make the OIC contribution to our joint programmes and activities more effective.

Allow me to raise an issue which I had hesitated to mention before the General Assembly. However it is my hope that raising it will enable us to achieve the desired objective. The issue concerns the facilities and privileges granted to missions to the United Nations in accordance with the Headquarters Agreement. It is well known that the Permanent Observer Mission of the OIC, like those of the League of Arab States and of the Organization of African Unity, does not fully enjoy these facilities and privileges as compared to the missions of some other regional organizations. I should mention here that the Permanent Observer Mission of the OIC and the offices

of other intergovernmental and regional organizations accredited to the United Nations Office at Geneva enjoy all such facilities and privileges, which enables them to carry out their various tasks and responsibilities more effectively.

The Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States raised this issue in his statement before the General Assembly last week. We raise it once again in the hope that the authorities responsible for the implementation of the Headquarters Agreement will give serious consideration to this matter and will attach to it the importance it deserves so that we can discharge our responsibilities fully and effectively.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm our ongoing interest in cooperation and coordination with the United Nations and our full commitment to the provisions and the noble purposes of the Charter.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/53/L.13.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt that draft resolution?

*Draft resolution A/53/L.13 was adopted* (resolution 53/16).

**The Acting President:** May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 26?

*It was so decided.*

*The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.*

United Nations A/53/PV.49

# General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-third Session

49th plenary meeting
Thursday, 29 October 1998, 3 p.m.
New York

*President*: Mr. Opertti ..... (Uruguay)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Semakula Kiwanuka (Uganda), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.*

**Agenda item 35**

**Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/53/419)**

**The Acting President:** I give the floor to the representative of Burkina Faso, who will speak on behalf of the Organization of African Unity.

**Mr. Kafando** (Burkina Faso) (*interpretation from French*): In his statement to the fifty-third session of the General Assembly last September, the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) stated,

> "In their struggle and daily efforts to emerge from underdevelopment, African Governments and peoples are not alone. They know how to rely on the sincere support of their friends. This includes the operational development system of the United Nations, which I should like to commend for its dedication to the uplifting struggle against poverty and other forms of deprivation that afflict African peoples." *(A/53/PV.7, p. 18)*

Today — at the exact moment when we are being called upon to consider the question of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity — that statement is particularly significant. Given their very noble ideal of safeguarding peace, these two institutions cannot be opposed to each other but rather must complement each other. Without being ostentatious, the current cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity nonetheless sets a high standard. At the outset, however, these organizations' relations consisted only of the existence in Addis Ababa of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), which was followed by the establishment in New York of an observer mission of the Organization of African Unity to the United Nations.

As the first element of this cooperation, the ECA has done useful work, particularly in carrying out programmes in the area of transportation and telecommunications during the United Nations Decade for Transport and Communications in Africa, as well as in the areas of science and technology, trade, small- and medium-sized businesses and so forth. For example, the ECA contributed to the elaboration of the Lagos Plan of Action, a genuine distillation of Africa's strategy for endogenous and self-reliant development.

I should also highlight the very effective work done by the United Nations Development Programme through its African offices, as well as the work of the specialized agencies, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations

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Children's Fund, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization and the World Food Programme. Nor should I overlook the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Information Centres, the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and, of course, the Bretton Woods institutions.

Nowadays, we are witnessing a true institutionalization of relations between the two organizations in the form of periodic meetings and consultations between the two Secretaries-General, exchanges of information, coordination of actions and cooperation programmes.

In terms of institutional relations, the only blemish remaining is the restrictiveness of the symbolic status of the OAU observer mission here in New York, and we thus call for an expansion of its rights to enable it to do its job properly. However commendable and tangible it may be, this cooperation still needs to be strengthened in view of the immense challenges facing today's world. The United Nations could, for example, step up its cooperation by taking into consideration the priorities set by the OAU's thirty-fourth summit.

In the area of peacekeeping, the current Chairman of the OAU appealed to the United Nations

> "to contribute not only to strengthening structurally the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa, but also to provide technical and logistical support, since in the end we share the same ideal: assuring for our world the security and peace essential to its development and flourishing". (ibid.)

Given this perspective, a United Nations contribution to the OAU Peace Fund, which was created in March 1993 primarily to consolidate the efforts of preventive diplomacy, would certainly be greatly appreciated. There is no need to spell out the fact that financial and logistical management of crises is a tremendous burden for our weak economies. Still in the same sphere, it would be desirable for the United Nations Secretary-General to send a representative to all African meetings dealing with conflict settlement. Such an approach would make it possible to understand better, at first hand and in greater depth, the issues involved in certain African decisions. I note as a very timely move that the current Chairman of the OAU invited the United Nations Secretary-General or his representative to participate in the next meeting on the dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea, scheduled for Ouagadougou on 7 and 8 November next.

Clearly, Africa, which is caught up in the problems of globalization and the world economic crisis, relies a great deal on cooperation with the United Nations operational system in order to secure its own development.

But what can we expect from the United Nations? In terms of cooperation in the area of economic development *stricto sensu*, it would be tedious to go back over what Africa can expect from the United Nations in terms of resource mobilization, debt alleviation or debt forgiveness — all these things have been extensively discussed in the context of the consideration of the Secretary-General's report on the situation in Africa and in the debate on the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

The new approach that I am proposing is rather to determine what kind of assistance the United Nations can give in the area of development strategy and methodology. The suggestions that come to mind are as follows.

First of all, the United Nations should readjust its approach vis-à-vis Africa — that is, as far as possible, it should avoid a superficial approach to helping us, but rather should use genuine substantive analysis and take into account our specific realities. In this regard, I note that the Secretary-General recently organized a high-level meeting of mostly African leaders to study his report on the situation in Africa. Doubtless, the conclusions yielded by that meeting, together with the proposals made in the General Assembly, will be crucial in identifying solutions to the problems of debt, rationalizing human resources, mobilization of financial resources and so forth. This kind of initiative deserves to be encouraged.

Hence, thanks to its specialized institutions, the United Nations should be able to help Africa take into account the cultural dimension of its development, since development for African society implies the ability to assimilate innovations and changes, as we have seen in the case of Asian countries. This last requirement also presupposes support for the efforts of the OAU to promote human resources development because the centre of all development is the human being.

Through its vast experience and its capable staff, the United Nations can help African countries institute a political and legal environment conducive to development. By setting up measures that will encourage disarmament, it can help the countries of Africa redirect certain military expenditures to the needs of development.

In the immediate future, however, the tangible cooperation that the OAU keenly awaits from the United Nations is willing and massive support for the holding of the economic summit of 1999. The Secretary-General is already committed to this undertaking. There can be no doubt that that highly important meeting will further consolidate and strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU, to the greater benefit of the peoples of Africa and of humankind as a whole.

**Mr. Sucharipa** (Austria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. In addition, the Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated country, Cyprus, align themselves with this statement.

First of all, the European Union would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for the report submitted under the agenda item we are now considering. Together with the landmark document on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, which we had the occasion to discuss two weeks ago, this report underlines the importance of close cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

The European Union welcomes the ongoing dialogue between the United Nations and the OAU aimed at building closer ties in order to enhance their mutual capacity for preventing and resolving conflicts in Africa and for coordinating their efforts in that regard, in particular through the meetings of the two Secretaries-General and their senior advisers in Addis Ababa and in New York earlier this year.

Over the last year the number of violent conflicts in Africa has increased, and some of them show alarming signs of deterioration. Grave breaches of humanitarian law and human rights, the plight of refugees, ethnic hatred and arms-trafficking remain among the key problems of regional and international concern. While stressing the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security, the European Union considers it essential that African countries and regional organizations play a leading role in conflict prevention and resolution in Africa.

We welcome the adoption of Security Council resolution 1197 (1998), which aims at supporting regional initiatives in Africa, as well as enhancing coordination between the United Nations and the OAU in the field of conflict prevention and the maintenance of peace. We hope that the expeditious implementation of the many aspects contained in that resolution will contribute to further strengthening the ties between the two organizations. We also welcome the statement of the Security Council President on 16 September this year (S/PRST/1998/28), in which the Council expressed its commitment to exercising its responsibility in relation to Africa and reaffirmed, *inter alia*, the need to strengthen Africa's capacity to participate in all aspects of peacekeeping operations, including the military, police, humanitarian and other civilian components.

The prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa constitute priorities for the European Union and we are committed to working in partnership with Africa to secure peace and democracy, respect for human rights, political stability and economic and social development. We are committed to a proactive policy focusing on preventing the outbreak of violent conflicts at an early stage, as well as on post-conflict peace-building and using the full range of policy instruments available. These goals are set out in the European Union's Common Position on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, agreed in 1997. In this context, the European Union continues its support of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

In May 1998, the European Union adopted the Common Position on Human Rights, Democratic Principles, the Rule of Law and Good Governance in Africa. This Common Position gives a high priority to a positive and constructive approach with a view to supporting efforts of the OAU, subregional groups and individual countries to promote respect for human rights and good governance.

The Union has established a consultative mechanism with the OAU, which we wish to develop further. We will strengthen the dialogue with the OAU and subregional organizations on concrete possibilities for backing their efforts, *inter alia*, in the fields of early warning, preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and awareness of the importance of respect for human rights,

the rule of law, a pluralistic society, democratic institutions and practices and a culture of tolerance.

Over the last 10 years, African countries have initiated a number of reforms aimed at democracy and respect of human rights. However, the mechanisms to solve and manage tensions and differences require strengthening. Conflict prevention and management call for a pluralistic civil society which is based on dialogue and the networking of various interest groups, political systems which are based on cooperation rather than confrontation, as well as the rule of law to protect democratic principles and human rights. The European Union is also willing to further increase its cooperation with the OAU and its member States in these areas.

We welcome the OAU's endorsement, at its summit in Ouagadougou in June 1998, of the EU's proposal to hold, in the first half of the year 2000, a summit of the heads of State and Government of the European Union and of Africa. We are intensively working on the preparation of the summit in order to achieve a successful outcome. The summit will offer a unique opportunity to debate political and economic subjects of common interest at the highest political level.

The Union attaches great importance to the regular contacts and dialogue which it holds with regional and subregional organizations in Africa and we work to enhance our dialogue, *inter alia*, with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in eastern Africa and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Cooperation between the European Union and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has continued to progress and a comprehensive dialogue has been established in various areas of cooperation. The third SADC-European Union Ministerial Conference will take place in Vienna in early November. It will review cooperation between the European Union and SADC since 1994 and determine the priorities for future cooperation.

Africa, in particular sub-Saharan Africa, stands at the crossroads. On the one hand, we observe important signs of political and socio-economic progress; on the other, violent conflicts are spreading over parts of the continent, threatening to escalate into open regional warfare. The European Union would like to reiterate its deep concern over the fact that, in spite of important regional and subregional efforts, instability seems to be gaining ground. This apparent downward spiral has to be stopped and we call upon all concerned to do their utmost and to seek peaceful solutions. The European Union strongly believes that closer United Nations-OAU cooperation is a key factor in improving the chances of reaching lasting settlements.

Regarding the Great Lakes region, we give full support to the diplomatic efforts of the United Nations and the OAU, as well as of regional leaders and other personalities concerned, to restore peace to the region and promote national reconciliation. We continue to support the idea of convening an international conference at an appropriate time, under the joint auspices of the United Nations and the OAU and enjoying the support of all the States of the region, in order to address, within a global approach, the root causes of the conflicts in the region. The European Union Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Ambassador Aldo Ajello, whose mandate the European Union has just extended until 31 July next year, will continue to work closely with the relevant organizations and personalities.

The Union is deeply concerned about the ongoing crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the threat any escalation of the conflict poses to the region as a whole. We support the principle of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbouring countries and we call, in this context, for a cessation of external interference. Governments should use their influence to advance the cause of peace. There can be no military solution to the conflict and we call upon the parties to agree to an immediate ceasefire. We welcome African initiatives to find a peaceful negotiated settlement acceptable to all Congolese. We stand ready to help the political dialogue and to support any negotiation scheme obtaining the consent of all parties involved, *inter alia*, through the assistance of the EU Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region. The Union strongly urges the parties involved in the conflict to respect human rights and humanitarian law and to abstain from acts of indiscriminate violence, especially against civilians, and ethnic propaganda and harassment. We urge the parties to secure safe and unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance.

The European Union is deeply dismayed at the severe deterioration of the political and military situation in Angola, which threatens to reverse the peace process into a full-scale military confrontation. We are convinced that a lasting peace in Angola can be obtained only by full compliance with the Lusaka Protocol, which, together with the "Acordos de Paz" and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, remain the

fundamental basis for the peace process. UNITA's leadership has to comply immediately and without condition with its obligations under the Lusaka Protocol. It has to give up any military ambition, refrain from rearming, fully demobilize and, finally, transform itself from a military organization into a civilian political party. It has to allow the extension of State administration throughout the whole country. The European Union is taking all measures in order to fully implement the sanctions imposed by the Security Council against UNITA and urges all States to do likewise in order to encourage UNITA to abide by its obligations.

The European Union welcomes and fully supports the efforts of the OAU to bring a negotiated settlement to the border conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia and we urge both parties to do their utmost towards a peaceful solution.

The European Union urges the parties in Guinea-Bissau to continue negotiations under the joint Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP)/ECOWAS mediation to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. With regard to Sierra Leone, we strongly condemn the reported atrocities committed by rebel forces. We encourage the Government of Sierra Leone to do its utmost to foster peace and the reconciliation process in the country. Regarding the conflict in Somalia, which has taken a terrible toll, especially among civilians, the European Union remains deeply concerned at the Somali leaders' inability to negotiate a peaceful settlement of their disputes.

The time is opportune to focus our attention on the sustainable development of Africa, which remains a major challenge to be met by the African continent. It is encouraging to note that numerous African countries have undertaken sweeping reforms of their economic policies and of the public sector and that, after two decades of decline, we have recently been able to observe signs of economic recovery. Although this globally positive trend may mask substantial disparities amongst African countries and remains fragile to external and internal shocks, it does give reason for optimism.

At the same time, the fight against widespread poverty in Africa remains one of the crucial challenges of our time. In this context, economic growth has to be accelerated and development programmes have to ensure that the poorest groups of the population are their first beneficiaries. Human and social development should be moved to the centre of macroeconomic policy design and implementation.

The European Union remains committed to the fight against poverty and to meeting the target of reducing the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by half by the year 2015. The Union — as the major donor to Africa, contributing two thirds of total official development assistance flows to sub-Saharan Africa, and as the most open market for those countries — is committed to renewing the partnership agreement with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and to transforming the Lomé Convention into an even more modern and efficient framework for cooperation which will remain strong and prominent in the twenty-first century.

Africa bears the primary responsibility for creating an environment where development is sustainable and prosperity is ensured. Each Government has to take good governance seriously, ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law and strengthening democratization. African countries must do their utmost to live in an environment of good-neighbourly relations.

In conclusion, let me emphasize our great appreciation for the role the OAU has been playing in determining its responsibilities and in defining a common vision of the future of the African continent. We are looking forward to closely cooperating with the OAU, and we encourage the strengthening of its ties with the United Nations so as to bring the expertise and political weight of both organizations together in order to best face the challenges of the next millennium.

**Mr. Gambari** (Nigeria): In my capacity as the Chairman of the Group of African States for the month of October 1998, I have the honour to address the General Assembly at its fifty-third session on this agenda item on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Please allow me at the outset to express the appreciation of the group of ambassadors of the OAU at the United Nations for the Secretary-General's excellent report on the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

The relationship between the United Nations and the OAU is a positive one, in line with provisions of Chapter VIII, Articles 52 to 54, of the Charter of the United Nations, which recognize the relevance and indeed the importance of proximity and the familiarity of regional organizations with the local situation and environment of conflicts or potential conflicts. Accordingly, the Charter encourages consultations between regional organizations

and the United Nations as partners in progress in the mutual search for international peace and security.

Although the Security Council has primary responsibility, for the maintenance of international peace and security, as mandated by the United Nations Charter, the fact is that the OAU has a comparative advantage in assisting with the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in our continent, Africa. OAU member States are nearer to conflict situations in the continent; they have greater understanding of the causes of African conflicts; and they tend to exhibit more political will to find solutions to the problems faced by the African continent.

Since its inception, the OAU has striven to promote greater understanding and good neighbourliness between and among member States. The organization has also been consistent in its endeavour to prevent conflicts and achieve the peaceful resolution of local conflicts while working closely with the United Nations Security Council. In recent years, much has been done to further improve the cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU, especially in the political, social, economic, technical and cultural areas, which are also relevant to conflict prevention prospects in Africa.

Conflict prevention holds the key to the maintenance of peace and security in Africa and perhaps elsewhere in the world. However, it remains a big challenge both for regional organizations like the OAU and for the United Nations. That is because without absolute vigilance, the early signs of impending danger could easily escape our notice. It is with such an awareness that the United Nations and the OAU have developed and continue to fine-tune common indicators for early warning and joint training of staff in the field of conflict prevention.

Preventive diplomacy, disarmament as regards small arms and the preventive deployment of troops to areas of simmering tension are all areas being seriously explored and considered in an effort to further reinforce the cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations.

Where conflicts have already degenerated into violence, the OAU, in consultation with the United Nations, steps in to prevent further escalation, using its peacekeeping facilities. This approach is sometimes exercised through the subregional groupings such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The OAU indeed plays a complementary role to the Security Council in the mutual task of maintaining international peace and security. It is therefore imperative that the United Nations subsequently increase logistic and financial support to the OAU and other regional and subregional organizations in order to enable them to become even more effective partners with the United Nations in their joint tasks and objectives. This is the way forward to successfully address the immense obstacles to international peace and security.

In this regard, the United Nations should continue to assist the OAU in strengthening its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa. Moreover, the United Nations should ensure the effective implementation by Member States as well as by the United Nations system as a whole of the recommendations of the recent report by the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

The United Nations Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, which is chaired by my country, Nigeria, has been working closely with the African Group as a whole at the United Nations in order to achieve the common goals of the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. The OAU member States, we must continue to emphasize, send troops, provide force commanders and dutifully pay their assessed contribution for United Nations peacekeeping operations, in spite of their own often very limited financial resources.

The promotion of a culture of peace, tolerance and harmonious relationships within and between States is important to the creation of stability and security in Africa. A committed and dedicated effort to pursue economic development is undoubtedly a prerequisite for peace and stability in Africa. In this regard, we welcome the contributions of the African Development Bank (ADB) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to the work of the OAU/ADB/ECA joint secretariat, and of the United Nations agencies working in Africa which are involved in efforts to help translate into reality the objectives of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community.

Indeed, the entire United Nations system, as well as the States Members of the United Nations, are urged to extend their support for the operation of the African Economic Community and at the same time to adopt appropriate measures to ensure the effective

implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), in particular with regard to economic reforms. These involve the effective mobilization and efficient utilization of domestic resources, the promotion of the private sector and foreign direct investment, the intensification of the democratic process and the strengthening of civil society, the environment and development, resource flows, the solution of Africa's debt problem, trade facilitation and market access, the diversification of African economies, the improvement of the physical and institutional infrastructures and social and human resource development, and, last but not least, women in development.

Finally, we of the African Group support the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity that will be considered by the General Assembly. We believe that both organizations should increase the frequency of their consultations in order to enable them to maximize the achievement of their joint objectives while avoiding unnecessary duplication of both efforts and resources.

**Mr. Ka** (Senegal) (interpretation from French): My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Burkina Faso on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and by Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States.

For my delegation, consideration of agenda item 35, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity" is of particular importance, because since 1960 Africa has been at the heart of the concerns of the international community and therefore has been in the forefront of the agenda of the United Nations.

This interest in Africa certainly derives from the geopolitical situation of the continent and from the diversity of political and economic problems confronting the African countries, but also from the huge and so far unexplored potentials which make this continent a zone of opportunity and growth for the future.

Thanks to the courageous joint actions of the African leaders and their peoples, Africa is rediscovering stability, which is reaffirmed and consolidated through the will to focus on prevention and settlement of conflicts and the development of the continent. In these areas, the OAU is playing an ever-growing role, particularly through its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and the involvement of regional organizations.

In the economic field, struggling against poverty, providing fundamental social services, dealing with demographic pressure and pursuing the process of regional economic integration have all been part of the efforts to lay the groundwork for sustainable economic growth in Africa.

All these efforts and all of these gains on the march toward the peace and development of Africa have been made possible through the multifaceted cooperation which Africa has with the United Nations in various fields. Today, the entire international community shares the concept that the best way to ensure peace and security for Africa is, without question, the advancement of sustainable development on the continent. Without peace, security and stability, development is merely hollow rhetoric, and without development, peace can only be fragile.

This approach adopted by the United Nations forms the foundation for the new United Nations agenda for the economic social development of Africa for the 1990s. It is at present being implemented in a concerted fashion by the countries of Africa and the operational bodies in the United Nations within the framework of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa.

My delegation believes that the status of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the OAU and the League of Arab States and their observer missions to the United Nations should be reconsidered to allow these three organizations to enjoy the privileges and immunities which are essential for the official exercise of their responsibilities. It is my delegation's view that this question should be considered in particular by the Committee on Relations with the Host Country in the light of Article 105 of the Charter and in the light of accepted practice in certain host countries.

In conclusion, the numerous challenges confronting Africa demand time, energy and appropriate comprehensive responses from the United Nations, from its system and from the entire international community. To that end, and through effective cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU substantive progress has been made in the right direction. For this reason my delegation would like to appeal to Member States to support the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

**Mr. Dlamini** (Swaziland): My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Cooperation

between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity", contained in document A/53/419.

The Kingdom of Swaziland is grateful to note that efforts are being made to implement the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations concerning regional arrangements, which set forth the basic principles of governing their activities and for establishing the framework for cooperation with the United Nations in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security. Evidently, cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has been enhanced and fruitful over the years since the signing of the agreement in 1965.

As stated in the report, the Secretaries-General of the two organizations have met and consulted in a number of areas. This is a commendable effort on their part, in view of the many problems Africa still faces. These persistent problems vary from economic and social difficulties to a number of conflicts both within and among nation-States.

The involvement of the Department of Political Affairs in the areas of international peace and security is pivotal in contributing to one of the major aspirations of the OAU, which is to ensure the sustainable development of a peaceful Africa. The establishment of a United Nations liaison office with the OAU in Addis Ababa will further strengthen cooperation between the two organizations. My delegation is also encouraged to note that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has seconded a staff member to the liaison office. For this reason, the OAU will now be better informed of all United Nations actions in the humanitarian field.

Africa's pursuit of preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and peace-building, including post-conflict peace-building, will be better articulated by the collective efforts of the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, the OAU Conflict Prevention Unit and the United Nations through its liaison office.

May I briefly recall that Swaziland supports the revitalization of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa. We believe that the Centre has an important role to play in promoting confidence-building measures at the regional level, thereby encouraging progress in the area of sustainable development. There is a need therefore to provide the necessary resources to enable the newly appointed Director to strengthen the activities and programmes of the Centre.

Furthermore, the Kingdom of Swaziland is appreciative of the efforts and involvement of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, particularly with respect to the Southern African Development Community. The High Commissioner's initiative in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of projects on human rights, democracy and the rule of law will be of benefit to the countries in southern Africa to which a human rights resource person has been assigned.

Cooperation in the field of economic and social development remains pivotal for Africa. The participation of the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries in the OAU summit held at Ouagadougou in June 1998 was yet another positive demonstration of commitment to the quest for the economic and social development of African countries. Furthermore, we commend the efforts and involvement of the Economic Commission for Africa, of United Nations funds and programmes and of other agencies. Here I would mention the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Intellectual Property Organization, among many others.

Still on the subject of economic and social development, much more effort is still needed to ensure that poverty is alleviated in Africa. To this end, a number of commitments have been made, but unfortunately these efforts have not met with positive results.

The progress report of the Secretary-General, entitled "Mobilization of additional resources for African development: a study on overall resource flows to Africa" and contained in document A/53/390/Add.1, gives a clear and analytical picture of the prevailing situation. It was evident in 1991, when the General Assembly approved the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s that there was a need to mobilize new and additional resources in this area. Seven years later, however, the situation has only become more intense. This greater need calls for even

more urgent action in addressing all the problems besetting Africa.

Poverty in Africa persists, foreign debt is still a major problem, the domestic savings rate has stagnated, official development assistance is on the decline and private capital flows remain small. This is the situation Africa is faced with. Evidently, the situation is unlikely to change for the better in the foreseeable future unless there is renewed political will and commitment from the international community. Africa's growth rates need to be substantially higher than they are at present, and additional resources must therefore be mobilized.

In conclusion, my delegation reiterates the importance of retaining this item on the agenda of the General Assembly annually. Recalling previously adopted resolutions, we would like to state that the draft resolution to be submitted to the Assembly at a later date will further enhance cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU, and we shall fully support its adoption.

**Mr. Hachani** (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): My country endorses the statements made earlier in the debate by the representative of Burkina Faso on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States. My delegation wishes to address a few additional points on the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity". The importance of this item is steadily growing because of the priority the United Nations now gives to Africa and because of the special responsibility of the United Nations towards the African continent.

I should like to underscore my delegation's interest in strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. I welcome what has been achieved thus far through that cooperation. I want also to pay tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his tireless efforts to assist us in Africa to promote peace, security and development in our continent. The Secretary-General's report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity describes the activities of the United Nations and its agencies in that connection and the progress that has been made.

*Mr. Filippi Balestra (San Marino), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

The international community's present interest in Africa is in line with the urgent appeals made over the years in many international and regional forums by my country and its President, His Excellency Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Africa is determined to take charge of its own fate, relying first and foremost on its own capacities and on inter-African solidarity and cooperation. But it needs the support and solidarity of the international community in view of the major challenges it must overcome, including those posed by war, by poverty and by disease. These challenges can be tackled only with resolute international action and in close consultation with the African States and with the Organization of African Unity, which is the proper framework for cooperation with Africa.

We welcome the tradition of consultations that has been established between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and of the Organization of African Unity, and we hail their initiative to meet twice a year, along with their senior advisers, to discuss priority areas of cooperation and to coordinate their efforts. That initiative and the establishment of a United Nations liaison office with the Organization of African Unity will help strengthen cooperation between the two organizations and ensure coordination in the implementation of the various programmes and activities that relate to Africa. Moreover, the decision of the Security Council to convene ministerial meetings every two years to assess progress in promoting peace and security in Africa reflects the heightened importance the Council attaches to that continent.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity in the field of the maintenance of peace has yielded encouraging results. Here, building the capacity of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution is of particular importance in view of the growing number of situations it has been called upon to address since its establishment. While the maintenance of international peace and security is principally the responsibility of the United Nations, regional organizations can — as the experience of the Organization of African Unity demonstrates — contain hotbeds of regional tension and make a significant contribution to the success of United Nations peacekeeping efforts.

Indeed, having achieved such results since its creation only a few years ago, and despite its limited means, the Mechanism deserves to be encouraged. The Mechanism reflects the determination of African States to

make preventive diplomacy a constant feature of the activities of the Organization of African Unity aimed at eliminating foci of tension, restoring peace and security, and bringing reconciliation to the region. In that context, consolidating coordination between the two organizations and supporting the Mechanism by providing it with adequate means will enable the Organization of African Unity to anticipate and prevent conflicts and to act more rapidly to contain crises continent-wide.

The restoration of peace and security in Africa necessarily involves eliminating the root causes of the hotbeds of tension and conflict. The deployment of efforts towards sustainable development in Africa is a prerequisite for the creation of a climate conducive to the establishment of peace, security and stability throughout the continent. The United Nations plays a key role in this context by devising specific programmes in support of the continent's efforts in the area of economic and social development and by mobilizing the required international support, in particular on the part of the wealthier countries. In this regard special attention should be paid to resolving the debt problem of African countries.

In his report, the Secretary-General touched on a number of activities undertaken jointly between the OAU and the specialized agencies of the United Nations in the area of economic and social development. We welcome this cooperation, and we call for a stepping up of efforts to harmonize these activities with those undertaken in the area of the maintenance of peace, in view of the close link between these various topics.

Likewise, we welcome the positive initiative represented by the decision of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to organize, in conjunction with the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, meetings with the leaders of the world's major corporations to heighten their awareness of the progress made in Africa and the new investment opportunities that it offers in key sectors for growth. We hope that this initiative will contribute to mobilizing the funds that Africa needs for its economic and social development.

In his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, the Secretary-General advocated a series of actions in favour of peace, stability and development in Africa. Coordination with the OAU in implementing these activities will heighten their chances of success. Africa has made significant progress towards democracy, the promotion of human rights and economic reform. These advances deserve the support of the international community in the context of respect for the sovereignty of African States.

**Mr. Konishi** (Japan): The importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, particularly in addressing issues of economic development and conflict prevention, cannot be overemphasized. Japan sincerely welcomes the emphasis which the Organization of African Unity (OAU) places on its cooperation with the United Nations in these areas.

The issues of conflict prevention and development in Africa are inextricably related. Thus, in considering conflict prevention and post-conflict economic and social development, it is necessary to return to an analysis of the root causes of the conflicts and to address the situation in Africa by adopting a comprehensive approach that encompasses the political, economic and social fields.

In the recognition that peace and development are closely related, Japan is taking initiatives which it hopes will strengthen the cooperative efforts of the United Nations and regional organizations, particularly the OAU.

First, in January the Government of Japan hosted the Tokyo International Conference on Preventive Strategy to devise a comprehensive strategy for conflict prevention, giving particular attention to the situation in Africa. The report of the Tokyo Conference (A/53/63), recommended measures which the United Nations and regional organizations might take immediately, including those relating to the enhancement of Africa's preventive capacity, especially the early warning capability. At the conference, specific policy proposals related to this area were put forward, including suggestions for the promotion of initiatives by regional organizations, the enhancement of the operational capabilities of regional institutions, and a personnel training programme by regional organizations.

Secondly, just last week, Japan, together with the United Nations and the Global Coalition for Africa, organized the second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II), which was attended by the Secretary-General, a number of heads of State or Government of African countries, and representatives of international organizations. The conference concluded with the adoption of the Tokyo Agenda for Action identifying critical development issues in Africa, articulating the goals and objectives of efforts to address

those issues, and encouraging the international community to cooperate in order to achieve those goals.

Thirdly, as mentioned in the policy address of the Foreign Minister of Japan, Mr. Koumura, during TICAD II, Japan has also been cooperating bilaterally with the OAU. Through our contributions to the OAU Peace Fund, we are helping the organization to strengthen its capacity in conflict prevention and resolution, including establishing the computer network connecting the United Nations, the OAU and other organizations for early warning of conflicts.

I should also add that, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Japan has been taking active part in the work of following up the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on Africa, in which the Council adopted a resolution addressing the need for strengthening the coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations.

In closing, I should like on behalf of the Government of Japan, to commend the initiatives and coordinating efforts of the OAU in the area of conflict prevention, peace-building and economic development in Africa. We trust that its evolving cooperative relationship with the United Nations will serve as a model for other regional and subregional organizations as they address the issues of peace and development.

**Mr. Kolby** (Norway): The Norwegian Government welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

Last year the Secretary-General was requested to report to the General Assembly on how this cooperation has evolved. The report reveals the wide scope of cooperation between the various United Nations institutions and the OAU. We are especially pleased to note the number of concrete steps that have been taken to strengthen this cooperation.

The discussion on the Secretary-General's report on security and development in Africa showed that recent developments in parts of Africa are worrying and may threaten the stability and future prospects of large parts of the continent. Mediation and peacekeeping efforts have been initiated in many cases, and it is crucial that these initiatives are coordinated and mutually supportive. Here the United Nations must play a leading role, in close cooperation with the Organization of African Unity and the subregional organizations.

We fully agree with the view that building closer ties between the United Nations and the OAU to enhance the mutual capacity for preventing and resolving conflicts in Africa is particularly important. The regular meetings between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the OAU to discuss priority areas of cooperation and coordination are key elements in this process.

Given the present number of conflicts on the African continent, we think that the focus on conflict prevention, early warning and the capabilities of the United Nations and the regional organizations to meet these challenges is particularly important in the dialogue between the United Nations and the OAU. We welcome the decision by the Department of Political Affairs and the office of the Permanent Observer to meet on a regular basis in order to facilitate the coordination of actions and initiatives. Furthermore, the establishment of a United Nations liaison office with the OAU in Addis Ababa is an important step in strengthening cooperation between the two organizations. We will specifically emphasize the role of this office in coordinating the various efforts in preventive diplomacy and peacemaking.

We also commend the report's emphasis on cooperation and coordination between the OAU and the subregional organizations, especially with regard to conflict prevention and regional development. We believe that the regular meetings and coordination mechanisms outlined in the report may be an important step in ensuring better coordination between the United Nations and its agencies and the subregional organizations. The OAU should play a key role in this respect.

Norway has for several years contributed financially to strengthening African capacity in peacekeeping and conflict prevention. The OAU's Mechanism for conflict resolution and the training-for-peace programme in the Southern African Development Community region are two examples in this regard. However, the conflicts we see in Africa today illustrate the need for increased assistance in this field. The Norwegian Government is committed to continuing its effort in cooperation with other partners to further strengthen African capacity in the area of peacekeeping and conflict prevention.

We also welcome the efforts by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to assist the OAU in implementing programmes intended to strengthen the

capacity of African organizations to meet humanitarian challenges.

The United Nations plays a crucial role in promoting economic and social development in Africa. Given the number of least developed countries on the continent, it is important that all parts of the United Nations system pay particular attention to Africa's development aspirations.

We have taken note of the activities in the economic and social fields conducted by the various organizations. Although we are pleased with the level of activity, we need to emphasize the importance of cooperation and coordination both at Headquarters and at the country level.

There can be no economic development without human development. An integral part of human development is respect for all human rights: civil, cultural, economic, political and social. We therefore welcome the project being implemented by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights that aims to strengthen Africa's regional mechanism for the promotion and protection of human rights.

The OAU has an important role to play in promoting peace and development in Africa. The call by Secretary-General Salim Salim for increased support by the United Nations to the OAU and the subregional organizations should be given the consideration and the follow-up it deserves.

**Mr. Rubadiri** (Malawi): I would like to begin by associating myself with the statement delivered by the representative of Burkina Faso, who spoke on behalf of the Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, contained in document A/53/419, which provides a detailed outline of the various areas of collaboration between the United Nations and the OAU.

Malawi is pleased to note that since the adoption by the Assembly almost a year ago of resolution 52/20, cooperation between the two organizations has steadily expanded and strengthened. Continued cooperation in matters of peace and security, as well as in the field of economic and social development, deserves the importance that is being accorded to it. That peace and development are mutually reinforcing aspects of life is an undeniable fact of which the international community has long been aware.

Conflict, both intra-State and inter-State, is one of the major factors that has reversed hard-won economic gains in a number of African countries. Meagre national resources are being diverted towards buttressing defence and security forces. In some instances, conflict has destroyed a country's infrastructure, rendering the national development effort a waste. We therefore welcome the emphasis that has been placed on collaboration in the prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa.

Malawi believes in the primacy of the strategy of early warning and conflict prevention, and that conflict resolution should be a second-best option. The regular consultations and exchanges of information taking place between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the OAU are an important development. In addition, the United Nations Department of Political Affairs, as overseer of the programme of cooperation, deserves to be provided with ample resources and support in order to fulfil its mandate.

The general lack of resources prevalent among African States has led to much of the continent's being ill prepared to deal with natural disaster and emergency situations. My Government therefore attaches considerable importance to the work being carried out by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in strengthening capacities for African organizations as well as building national capacities for disaster and emergency management.

Equally notable work is being undertaken by other agencies of the United Nations system in building the national capacities of African States in the field of human rights and good governance. In southern Africa we have welcomed the regional human rights resource person assigned by the High Commissioner for Human Rights to work voluntarily with Governments of the region. As a country that is involved in an irreversible process of consolidating and strengthening institutions of participatory democracy and the protection of human rights, among other aspects of good governance, Malawi appreciates the support of the United Nations system working in collaboration with the OAU.

In the economic and social field the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and a number of other

agencies have pooled their efforts in a partnership for development with African organizations as well as with individual Governments. Programmes relating to food security, control and eventual eradication of disease, education and revolutionizing information flow are some of the areas that are likely to form the basis of an economic take-off for the African continent.

While my delegation welcomes the existing arrangements for cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU, as outlined in the Secretary-General's report, we hope that the trend will continually be strengthened over time. The short-term marginalization of the continent, resulting from the process of globalization and growing interdependence, should not serve to undermine the existing partnership.

But how can one end without asking the question, who are all the OAU now? Perhaps Norway has just managed to give us part of the answer, and Austria may also have tried to do so. For sooner or later, as we enter the next century, the "O" may drop from the OAU — meaning the "Organization" part of it — and, like Europe's dropping the word "Community", Africa will become an "African Union". It is this aspect which concerns us, because it involves a number of young people.

Through its conflicts and displacements of human beings, especially women and children, Africa has been scattered around the world. I am thinking of a number of young men and women who are now scattered around the world, either by wars at home — by conflicts — or by having been born abroad of people separated from Africa by conflict.

I could give a personal example of this. My own family is scattered around the world. I have two sons who are married in Botswana, three girls who are married in Uganda, one son who is married in Kenya and another son who is married in El Segundo, California. All these sons and daughters are the future of Africa. Just as Norway said there could be no progress without human resources, this might be another dimension in which the OAU or Africa can now work hand in hand not only with the United Nations, but also with those countries which think the same as we do: that all those who have received knowledge and learned skills in countries which now have also become part of themselves, but not so much a part of Africa, can come back home and use those skills and that knowledge. Perhaps all those who have constituted a brain drain from Africa because of its conflicts and have benefited as academics and as professionals in other countries, can be given a chance to come back to Africa and practise those skills.

How can this be done? The United Nations can now begin to play a role by asking those who have spoken here not only come to vote for Africa but also to come up with tremendous statements. This I would also call part of our moment of seeking this United Nations connection with Africa.

For its part, Malawi is ready to work even more closely with both the United Nations system and regional organizations of the OAU.

**Mr. Muchetwa** (Zimbabwe): I am making this statement on behalf of my Ambassador.

My delegation welcomes this opportunity to deliberate on the question of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). We associate ourselves fully with the statements made by the Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso and the Permanent Representative of Nigeria, who spoke on behalf of the Group of African States. I wish to thank United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his informative report contained in document A/53/419, which is before the Assembly.

My delegation is pleased to note that, since their meeting in Harare on 3 June 1997, the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the OAU, together with their advisers, have continued their consultations in meetings both in New York and at OAU headquarters in Addis Ababa. We also welcome and encourage the organization of annual meetings between the secretariats of the two organizations, such as the recent one held in Addis Ababa from 6 to 8 May 1998, to review the implementation of existing programmes of cooperation and to agree on new ones, as well as on follow-up action.

Zimbabwe follows with keen interest the programmes of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations and arrangements, in particular the biannual meetings between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the heads of regional organizations and arrangements. We are pleased to note that the agenda of the last such meeting, which was held in New York on 28 and 29 July 1998, centred on cooperation for conflict prevention, focusing on the challenges of early warning and conflict prevention, the capabilities of the United Nations and regional

organizations to meet those challenges and practical modalities for collaborative interaction between them.

The importance which Africa attaches to this issue cannot be overemphasized. We therefore wish to reiterate our appeal to the United Nations and, through it, to the international community to extend, in concrete terms, assistance to the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. International support for Africa's efforts, including in the area of capacity-building, is needed for Africa's institutions and mechanisms to play their roles effectively in support of the United Nations peacekeeping activities in Africa.

In this regard, we welcome the establishment in April this year of the United Nations liaison office with the OAU in Addis Ababa to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations. We also note with appreciation the training assistance given by the United Nations Development Programme to OAU officers in the Conflict Management Division. It is our hope that the international community can build upon these initial, but crucial, steps.

Although Africa's economic and social crisis has been the subject of various initiatives, the continent's economic and social woes have remained unmitigated. Africa's sacrificial commitment, at the national level, to economic reform and restructuring programmes has largely gone uncomplemented by the requisite international support. Furthermore, Africa's endeavours to launch the African Economic Community and to revitalize the subregional groupings, which are the building blocks and pillars of that Community, continue to be hampered by an unfavourable international environment.

We in Africa believe in a United Nations which has matters of economic and social development at the very core of its agenda. We believe that the United Nations is uniquely placed to outline policy guidelines, mobilize and advocate for resources and coordinate the various efforts for economic and social development and well-being.

In this regard, we appreciate the analytical work done by the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries to find ways and means of harmonizing the various initiatives on African development. We also welcome the work plan adopted by the joint secretariat of the OAU, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank on major activities to be carried out for the launching of the African Economic Community up to the year 2000.

We wish to challenge the international community to give priority, not only to the formulation of development initiatives on Africa, but also and even more to their operationalization and implementation. We strongly believe that the peace and security that we so ardently seek to achieve cannot be attained in the conditions of abject poverty that are prevalent in Africa today. We are convinced beyond any measure of doubt that a politically stable and economically prosperous and vibrant Africa is best placed to contribute to greater global peace and security.

**Mr. Mohammed** (Ethiopia): At the outset, permit me to thank the Secretary-General for his report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). This report, in conjunction with the report on the causes of conflict in Africa, is further testimony to the importance and priority that the Secretary-General continues to give to the situation in Africa in general, and to cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in particular.

Since our deliberation last year on the agenda item on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, important developments have taken place in Africa. Some of these developments were, indeed, positive and encouraging. However, the overall situation in the continent, especially in the areas of peace and security, has remained precarious and even worsened in some instances. This state of affairs has, in turn, highlighted further the need for enhanced cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

The report of the Secretary-General provides valuable information on the measures taken with a view to enhancing cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the OAU. We welcome these steps. The institutionalization of regular consultation mechanisms between the two secretariats and the follow-up procedures put in place to coordinate the efforts of the two organizations are, indeed, commendable.

Needless to say, cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the maintenance of peace and security is essential and in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. In this regard, we note with satisfaction the actions taken by the United Nations over the past year, including the establishment of a United Nations Liaison Office with the OAU. The Office is expected to operate under a clear mandate and terms of reference that will enable it to play

the role assigned to it, especially in facilitating the exchange of information and in serving as a means of effective communication and interaction between the two organizations.

Furthermore, the activities of the various United Nations offices and agencies, such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and others, should be closely coordinated with that of the OAU. Such cooperation and coordination should aim at strengthening Africa's capacity and mechanisms, in particular through the mobilization and provision of the necessary financial and technical assistance to enhance OAU's institutional capacity.

As rightly pointed out by the Secretary-General in his report on the causes of conflict in Africa, United Nations support for regional peace initiatives is indispensable. In this connection, we wish to commend once again the Secretary-General and his staff for their continued efforts to closely coordinate the activities of the United Nations with those of the OAU and other regional organizations in the search for peace in the various conflict areas in Africa. In our own subregion, we are particularly pleased to note that the United Nations and its various agencies and programmes are working closely with our subregional organization, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), in support of our efforts and initiatives, especially on the situations in Somalia and the Sudan. It is our earnest hope that such cooperation and support will be further strengthened and enhanced.

Ethiopia, as a country mandated by the OAU and IGAD to assist in the search for peace in Somalia, attaches great importance to the role and support of the United Nations in bringing about a lasting solution to the crisis in Somalia. Our experience over the past few years has clearly shown that coordination of the efforts of all external actors and the need to avoid the proliferation of initiatives are essential factors for the success of the efforts for peace in Somalia. In this respect, the second international consultative conference on Somalia, held in Addis Ababa on 20 October 1998, has been particularly useful to the efforts to establish a mechanism for the coordination of all efforts for peace in Somalia. We are confident that the United Nations will remain engaged in the search for peace in Somalia and continue to assist the efforts of the OAU and IGAD.

In the economic and social fields, we note with satisfaction the important role that the various United Nations agencies and programmes, and most particularly the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), continue to play in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity. In this regard, we welcome the adoption of a work plan by the joint secretariat of the ECA, the OAU and the African Development Bank (ADB) on major activities to be carried out for launching the operation of the African Economic Community up to 2000.

Likewise, my delegation commends the important contributions that other United Nations agencies and programmes, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), among others, continue to make in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity. The efforts and activities of the United Nations system should focus, first and foremost, on priority areas, as well as on capacity-building and long-term development in Africa. The momentum for enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and OAU needs to be maintained in order to implement the political and economic agenda identified by African countries. At the same time, we wish to extend our appreciation to those United Nations agencies and programmes, such as the United Nations Development Programme, that have already taken steps to focus their activities on institutional capacity-building and the promotion of economic cooperation and integration in Africa.

The past few years have clearly shown that cooperation and coordination between regional organizations and the United Nations have become indispensable instruments in addressing vital issues in the areas of peace and security, as well as in economic and social development.

We have witnessed the increasing resort to regional mechanisms and arrangements to prevent and resolve regional conflicts in different parts of the world. While this trend is indeed welcome, it should be made clear, however, that the role of regional organizations and arrangements cannot be a substitute for the primary role and responsibility of the United Nations, in particular that of the Security Council, in the maintenance of international peace and security. The United Nations

system in general, and the Security Council in particular, should remain actively engaged and be able to fulfil their respective mandates and responsibilities.

In conclusion, I wish to state that Ethiopia, as a host country of the OAU and the ECA, which is the regional arm of the United Nations, is committed to contributing its part in the efforts to further strengthen and enhance the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

**Mr. Lee See-young** (Republic of Korea): My delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the agenda item under consideration, which underlines the importance of close cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

During this decade, Africa has made great strides towards stability, democracy and prosperity. However, armed conflicts persist in some parts of the continent, threatening regional peace and security. These conflicts are inflicting enormous suffering on innocent civilians by causing massive dislocations of people, humanitarian distress and serious violations of human rights. Furthermore, they are destroying the very resources that are essential for social and economic development. To meet these challenges, the international community has so far applied a vast amount of energy and resources, through the United Nations system and the other humanitarian organizations, often in cooperation with regional and subregional organizations.

We believe, however, that further efforts should be made to enhance cooperation and coordination between the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and subregional organizations. We are encouraged by the increasing cooperation between the Security Council and the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, the recent success of the United Nations-Economic Community of West African States joint undertaking in regional peacekeeping and the closer consultations and exchange of information between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and of the OAU and their advisers.

In our view, such cooperation enables the United Nations to draw on the local expertise and resources of regional organizations. The United Nations and regional organizations should also concentrate more on crisis prevention. As we know, it is always less costly to prevent crises than to react to them. In this vein, we welcome the establishment of the Trust Fund for Preventive Action of the Secretary-General, and I take this opportunity to express my Government's willingness to continue to contribute to it. We hope that this Fund will be further expanded through increased contributions so as to enable the Secretary-General to take preventive action in areas of potential conflict, including in Africa.

The international community also needs to continue helping regional organizations strengthen their capacity for peacekeeping. Capacity-building is important because it not only enables a swifter response to conflict, but also ultimately empowers African countries to resolve regional problems by themselves. In this regard, we welcome Security Council resolution 1197 (1998) of September 1998, which provides for ways and means to improve continued cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU. We support the early implementation of these steps.

Since the 1970s, the Government of the Republic of Korea has always given high priority to the promotion of cooperative relations with African countries. More recently, we have participated in a number of United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa, including the second United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), the third United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) and the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). Our attachment to the peace and prosperity of Africa became even stronger during our recent two-year involvement as a member of the Security Council.

We also stress that close cooperation in the field of economic and social development is fundamental for long-term peace and prosperity in Africa. The Republic of Korea will continue to focus its development cooperation policy on Africa through increased provision of human resources, through development programmes and through grants in the framework of official development assistance. In this connection, my Government has taken the initiative to organize, in cooperation with the United Nations, the Forum on Asia-Africa Cooperation in Export Promotion, to take place from 14-16 December this year. We expect that Forum to contribute to the facilitation of private sector development in Africa and the promotion of Asia-Africa interregional cooperation.

If we are to fulfil our responsibility for international peace and security, we should give higher priority to the African continent. The Republic of Korea reaffirms its

determination to continue to make a positive contribution in this process.

**Mr. Yacoubou** (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): We have recently witnessed an unleashing of the forces of nature in the form of hurricanes, bringing with them material damage and a great loss of human life. We are living in an interdependent world in which a phenomenon at one end of the earth rapidly gives rise to upheavals and repercussions at the other. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to convey its profound sympathy to the States and peoples affected by these phenomena, the terrible works of nature.

Bearing in mind such events, I take the floor to speak about agenda item 34, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which is the subject of the report of the Secretary-General in document A/53/419. The report provides an account of the efforts undertaken in the context of cooperation between the two organizations since the last session of the General Assembly. These include the creation within the OAU in Addis Ababa of a United Nations liaison office for preventive action, peacemaking and peace-building and the democratization process in Africa; the institutionalization of biannual meetings in New York and Addis Ababa for exchanging ideas and information between the two organizations; regular meetings between the OAU and various entities of the United Nations system to evaluate the implementation of ongoing programmes of cooperation and to prepare new ones; and meetings with the Group of African States in New York to brief them on priority issues.

We should add to that list the provision by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights of advisory services and technical assistance to the Governments of African countries, to the OAU and to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in promoting and protecting human rights.

The framework strategy with three components developed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is a significant instrument, and we should ensure that it is implemented methodically and efficiently.

The promotion and protection of human rights is, in my delegation's view, a key element in preventing conflicts and building peace in Africa, for, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Benin stated in the general debate,

> "there is no more urgent task today than replacing the culture of violence and war...by the culture of peace. We believe that the foremost duty...continues to be the promotion of peace and all its values and the behaviour that underpins and strengthens it." (*A/53/PV.20*)

The report before us indicates that in realizing this aim, within the United Nations system it is the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that has the responsibility for mobilizing the necessary resources. I should like to urge UNDP to spare no effort in carrying out this task, which is an essential prerequisite for attaining the strategy's targets. I should also like to appeal to donor countries to contribute to the realization of this project by making contributions of all kinds of resources.

My delegation commends the initiative of dispatching to southern Africa a regional human rights specialist who, in coordination with the resident representatives of UNDP in the subregion, is responsible for assisting in the elaboration, execution and evaluation of projects in the areas of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. In view of the importance of the issue, Benin takes the view that the sending to other subregions of Africa of human rights specialists would considerably contribute to the promotion of the values of peace.

The quest for peace in Africa requires a comprehensive, concerted and resolute approach that addresses the promotion of democracy and respect for human rights as well as economic and social development. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the work of the Development Assistance Committee, which has led to the identification of five priority areas: an increase in official development assistance; the conversion of the bilateral debts of the poorest African countries; liberalization of access to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative; the simplification of conditions for African products' access markets in industrialized countries; and an increase in private direct investment in Africa.

Various other initiatives have been launched to assist Africa, as an expression of our shared desire to see the continent emerge from its marginalization. In order to achieve their purposes, not only must these initiatives be harmonized, in keeping with the pertinent recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on Africa, but partial targets must be set, to be

achieved step by step and sector by sector, and regular evaluations of implementation must be scheduled.

Furthermore, my delegation takes the view that, in keeping with the results of the second Tokyo International Conference on African Development, which took place last week, the improvement of the situation in Africa through effective conflict management, peacemaking and peace-building and the elimination of poverty remains primarily the responsibility of the continent. However, the assistance of the international community and of the development partners is of the greatest importance.

I continue to believe that, as in the past, Africa will do its part.

Lastly, my delegation congratulates the Secretary-General on his efforts in managing the affairs of the Organization and associates itself with the statements of Burkina Faso and Nigeria made on behalf of the OAU and the African Group.

**The Acting President:** In accordance with General Assembly resolution 2011 (XX) of 11 October 1965, I now call on the Observer for the Organization of African Unity.

**Mr. Kébé** (Organization of African Unity) *(interpretation from French):* Allow me first of all to extend to the President, on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), my warmest and most heartfelt congratulations on his accession to the presidency of the Assembly.

It is a humbling honour to speak from this rostrum of the cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations. It is indeed a formidable honour, especially since I follow the representative of the current Chairman of the OAU and the Chairman of the African Group in addressing the Assembly. They have referred, with relevance and clarity, to the major themes of the cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU and have emphasized the focal points and areas of priority and have proposed new ideas. I fully associate myself with all their comments.

Therefore, and without denying the highly instructive value of repetition, I wish to assure the Assembly that, insofar as possible, I shall restrict my comments to areas which I consider to be of imperative necessity, with the understanding that all the areas of cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations are essential.

I shall begin by welcoming that cooperation — which I would describe as outstanding from all points of view — by thanking the United Nations Secretary-General for his continuous efforts to raise cooperation between our two institutions to an ever higher level and by congratulating him on the complete and precise report which is the subject of our debate.

The road we have come down together since the creation of this cooperation in 1965 is a long one, and our accomplishments are highly significant. But since perfection always lies out of reach, we need to be responsive to changing times and new events as we set about our joint task.

The fundamental changes experienced by the world today, as well as the multiplicity and complexity of the serious problems experienced by Africa, require a strengthening of the existing framework of cooperation and the identification of new approaches.

As for strengthening the already existing framework, we should point out the periodic high-level meetings between the Secretaries-General of the two Organizations during the summits of the OAU and the sessions of the General Assembly. These periodic meetings are complemented by ad hoc meetings whenever circumstances require or allow for them. At these meetings, the philosophy of cooperation is reaffirmed, principal themes are clarified, major orientations are redefined and guidelines are redrawn.

I wish also to mention the annual meetings of the two secretariats, held alternately at New York and at Addis Ababa, at which programmes for cooperation are finalized and adopted. But we see that, in practice, unforeseen difficulties always arise between the adoption of a programme and its implementation; the political will of leaders, however often reaffirmed, is insufficient to resolve these. That is why the two secretariats decided at their last meeting, held in May 1998 at Addis Ababa, to convene a follow-up and review session every six months. I wish here to hail the recent decision by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to open a liaison office with the OAU at Addis Ababa; this will fill a gap that hampered the effective follow-up of decisions that had been taken.

Among the areas of cooperation that I would qualify as being of the greatest urgency is that of conflict prevention, which since 1993 the OAU has made the highest of its priorities with the creation of the

Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. Because it has a presence throughout Africa, notably through its specialized agencies, the United Nations unquestionably has a great advantage with respect to gathering information that it can share with the OAU, which can then be ready to act in a timely manner in areas of potential conflict. The OAU, however, knows that information is merely a tool, but a tool that is indispensable in the timely political decision-making that alone can prevent conflicts.

Then there is the maintenance of peace. We would all agree that here the regional organizations must be allowed to play a pivotal role in conflict situations. Indeed, satisfactory solutions to some African conflicts can be — and, as we have seen, have been — found through regional initiatives. Others, however, are so complex that they require United Nations involvement because they demand vast human, material and financial resources. Fortunately, wherever such events occur in Africa, the OAU and the United Nations have stood side by side and have harmonized their efforts and pooled their means to find solutions to the problems.

Another area in which cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations can only benefit African States is support for the process of democratization, the institutionalization of good governance, respect for human rights, and the establishment of a culture of peace. Here, African leaders have made significant efforts, which deserve the joint support of our two institutions.

I should also mention post-conflict situations, in which a climate that has been made healthy is needed for any action aimed at genuine reconciliation. The OAU has unambiguously demonstrated its determination to fight impunity, by establishing the International Panel of Eminent Personalities to investigate the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

Finally, there is the social and humanitarian sphere where, as a result of actual or latent conflicts in Africa, the existence of a growing number of refugees and displaced or repatriated persons requires more intense cooperation and better coordination between the two organizations. Let me here congratulate the Secretary-General of the United Nations on his report on protection for humanitarian assistance to refugees and others in conflict situations, document S/1998/883 of 22 September 1998, which relates to the protection of refugees and of those engaged in delivering assistance.

In the economic sphere, there is no need to recall that Africa remains concerned with the search for permanent solutions to problems of economic growth and development. In recent years, the African countries have shown their concern through individual and joint efforts, in particular by undertaking radical economic reforms and continent-wide programmes such as the Lagos Plan of Action, which remains relevant 17 years later, the African Economic Community, established in 1991, and the 1995 Cairo Agenda for Action: Relaunching Africa's Socio-economic Development.

Parallel to these endogenous efforts, the international community has shown great interest in the campaign against poverty and in promoting economic growth and development in Africa. Here we hail the numerous initiatives of the international community in this sphere, nearly all of them conceived in this Assembly. I mention in particular the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), its predecessor the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, and the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, now in its second stage.

Yet everyone knows that these efforts have not yet yielded the results on which many African countries had counted. It is increasingly feared that the improvements gained through years of economic reforms and social constraints of all kinds will be swept away by the ongoing process of globalization. The African countries have made an effort to create and consolidate a climate conducive to development. They have clearly defined their share of the responsibility and have shouldered it as best they could. It is the response of the international community that is overdue in meeting the hopes of Africa.

The phenomenon of globalization is transforming the world into a global village — not a term of my own invention — characterized by interconnected networks, communications, knowledge and cultures, and by the interdependence of economies. Any weakness or shortcoming in one link in the chain will have an impact on all the other links: here I need only recall the crisis in Asia.

To my mind, the principle of solidarity needs to be reinvented on the global scale with a view to finding lasting solutions to the problems of Africa's foreign

indebtedness — which in spite of all the generous and praiseworthy initiatives, remains a thorny and painful issue; resolving the matter of increasing the flow of new and additional resources and of foreign direct investment; and finding a way to strengthen the competitive capacities of African countries to enable them to benefit from agreements concluded in the framework of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations.

The idea of a world that operates on two levels and at two speeds, as is the case now, is morally unacceptable and humanly untenable. The present state of the world seems to be ahead of human thinking. We need to reinvent, for human beings of the coming millennium, a "global village" mentality. There is nothing pejorative in this term. Only in this way can the disasters that bloodied the first half of the century and the continuing tensions that have left their mark on its second half be avoided in future.

The United Nations and the OAU are fully aware of the extent of these new challenges, and I am pleased to note here that they are together working to prepare people and institutions for the good life in the "village" of the twenty-first century.

**The Acting President:** I should like to inform members that a draft resolution on this item will be submitted to the Secretariat at a later date.

**Agenda item 23**

**Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/53/275 and Add.1)**

**Draft resolution (A/53/L.15)**

**The Acting President:** I give the floor to the representative of Guyana to introduce draft resolution A/53/L.15.

**Mr. Insanally** (Guyana): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/53/L.15, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community", on behalf of the 14 member States of that Community — Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and my own country, Guyana. We are pleased and privileged to have the co-sponsorship of the States named on the document, as well as of the following countries, which have since asked to join the list: Algeria, Bahrain, Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America.

At the outset, I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his report contained in document A/53/275 of 18 August 1998 and A/53/275/Add.1 of 16 September 1998. Outlined in the report is the wide range of activities in which the United Nations and the Caribbean Community are currently engaged as part of their ever-growing cooperation. Caribbean Community (CARICOM) States consider the relationship between these two institutions to be very beneficial to their own development and would consequently wish to see it strengthened and expanded.

Although CARICOM was granted observer status only in 1994, the countries which are members of this Community of nations have had a long and fruitful relationship with the United Nations. Many of our States in fact owe their freedom and independence in good measure to the decolonization campaign undertaken within the Organization in the aftermath of the Second World War. Today, almost six decades later, Caribbean States continue to rely on the provisions of the Charter for the protection of our hard-won sovereignty and territorial integrity. For us, as small States in a very uncertain world, the United Nations represents a shield and buckler against threats to our peace and security.

Equally important, the United Nations has been very instrumental over the years in assisting our economic and social development so that we might hope, in the words of the Charter, to live "in larger freedom". Its vast network of functional agencies, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), to name just a few, have helped considerably to improve the quality of life for our peoples. We would therefore wish to fully recognize and express our appreciation for the role which the entire system, and in particular the Department of Economic

and Social Affairs, has played — and continues to play — in promoting our welfare.

Given this established tradition of close cooperation, it is not surprising that our Community would wish to enhance its relations with the United Nations. In keeping with this desire, CARICOM formalized its observer status in 1996 and has since established a presence at Headquarters in New York. Increasingly, the two organizations have interacted through an exchange of information and periodic consultations. On occasion, their respective Secretaries-General meet to review and build upon their cooperation. By all accounts, the experience has been a very positive and rewarding one for all concerned.

Accordingly, the draft resolution that has been submitted for consideration this year seeks to reflect the achievements over the past two years and to promote even greater cooperation between the two bodies in the future. Reference is thus made in the preambular paragraphs to the First General Meeting, which was held on 27 and 28 May 1997 here at the United Nations between representatives of the Caribbean Community and its associated institutions on the one hand, and the United Nations system on the other. That meeting served to affirm the need to strengthen the cooperation between the two organizations in the areas of economic and social development and political and humanitarian affairs.

On that basis, the two parties have explored and delineated the areas in which future collaboration could take place.

In its operative portion the draft resolution welcomes the convening by the Secretary-General of the Third Meeting between the United Nations and Regional Organizations on 28 and 29 July 1998, with a follow-up planned for later this year. CARICOM's participation in this consultative process demonstrates, in our view, the fact that under the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter, every regional arrangement, no matter how small, can contribute to reinforcing international peace and security through the practice of preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and peace-building. In practical terms, CARICOM countries have come together with the United Nations and the Organization of American States to restore and support democratic government in our sister State of Haiti and, more generally, to buttress the democratic process throughout the region.

In the area of economic and social development, the United Nations has been a major catalyst for developmental activities in the Caribbean. With the assistance of friendly Governments such as Italy we have been able to undertake necessary programmes in the fields of energy and training to enhance the capability of public administration throughout the region. Cooperating with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee and other regional institutions, CARICOM and the United Nations are working actively to ensure the full implementation of Agenda 21 and, in particular, the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

Specifically, the draft resolution urges the specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations to cooperate with the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and CARICOM to initiate, maintain and increase exchanges and projects with the Caribbean Community and its associated institutions. Of particular importance and interest to us as member States are the issues of sustainable development, drug-trafficking, environmental protection, education and training, national disaster preparedness and, generally, the strengthening of our weak and fragile economies to deal with the challenges arising from the phenomenon of globalization and from the rapid liberalization of the world economy. The continuing cooperation between the United Nations and CARICOM should therefore be aimed at sensitizing the international community to the particular vulnerability of the small economies of the Caribbean and of the world to the vagaries of world trade and to the constant cycles of natural disasters. The donors' meeting scheduled for February next year offers a welcome opportunity to support the Programme for the Small Island Developing States.

In sum, the draft resolution before us is no more than an indication to the cooperating parties — namely the United Nations and CARICOM — as to how they may best be able to build on their existing relationship. The member States of the Caribbean Community sincerely hope that not only will the draft resolution be unanimously adopted, by consensus, but also that its implementation will receive the positive and practical support of the entire United Nations system.

The year ahead will be a very crucial one to the future of the countries of the Caribbean. We will need to take stock of what we have been able to do — and equally important, of what we have not been able to do — in terms of promoting the Agenda for Development. Therefore, when the United Nations and

CARICOM hold their second meeting in February 1999, we will look to see how the two institutions can further coordinate and maximize their efforts to assist us as member Governments in placing our peoples on the path of solid political, economic and social progress.

**Mr. Manz** (Austria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia — and the associated country Cyprus, as well as the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area, Norway, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union (EU) took note with great interest of the Secretary-General's report on the cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). We welcome the intensified cooperation and interaction between CARICOM and the United Nations in a wide range of areas, including political matters, sustainable development, environmental protection, drug control, education and science, economy, trade and integration, international law and, last but not least, media and information.

Increased exchange of information between the United Nations system and CARICOM took place in particular with respect to conflict prevention, governance, democracy and civil society issues, and poverty eradication. Joint efforts continued to promote environmental protection and enhance disaster response, management and preparedness. Coordination and cooperation in the context of the 1996 Barbados Plan of Action concerning drug control have been further strengthened. The EU expresses its appreciation of these developments.

This year CARICOM celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. The EU congratulates the Community on its achievements in the process of regional integration, which the EU since 1992 has actively supported, as we consider it a very important component of our cooperation with Caribbean States. In the last few years, we have not only noted a stronger Caribbean voice in international forums but also progress in the joint promotion of exports and growth in the attraction of investments through the Caribbean Development Bank.

Furthermore, the EU welcomes the progress in the implementation of the CARICOM single market and economy, and the further development of CARICOM's regional negotiating machinery, as reaffirmed by the CARICOM heads of Government at their nineteenth meeting, held in Saint Lucia this past summer.

The EU would also like to mention positively the development of closer relations within CARICOM with the Republic of Haiti and between CARICOM and the Dominican Republic as well as with Cuba as a member of the Association of Caribbean States.

In February 1997, CARIFORUM and the European Commission signed the Caribbean Regional Indicative Program under the Second Financial Protocol of Lomé IV, providing further substantial resources for regional projects in the Caribbean. In addition, considerable means were made available to assist in financing a wide range of projects in support of the 1996 Barbados Plan of Action concerning drug control cooperation and coordination. The EU continues to be the largest provider of grant aid to the region.

Because the Lomé agreement expires in 2000, the EU and its partners in CARICOM have started to consider the elements of new cooperation agreements. In a post-Lomé process, support for regional integration initiatives and for strengthening the capacities of regional organizations will remain one of the EU's priorities. In economic terms, diversification, economies of scale and better conditions for competition are factors that may promote economic growth and development.

We recognize that in reacting to new economic challenges small island developing States may face specific problems, caused by a shortage of suitable infrastructure, small domestic markets and geographical remoteness from neighbours and international markets, which constitute constraints on economic growth. Small island developing States are particularly exposed to external economic shocks and face marginalization in an increasingly globalized world economy. They are also particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of global climate change and thus need assistance in adapting to such changes. The apparent growing strength and frequency of tropical storms, such as the recent hurricane Georges, and the consequences of El Niño phenomena have resulted not only in massive loss of human life, but also in significant damage to ecological and economic resources and human settlements in the past decade. In recognizing this specific situation, in 1994 in Barbados the international community endorsed a programme of action for the sustainable development of such States. We are looking forward to the full appraisal of the

implementation of this programme in 1999, culminating in a special session of the General Assembly.

The EU reaffirms its commitment to continue providing financial and technical assistance in support of CARICOM's own efforts to cope with the various challenges. On top of bilateral contributions, within the framework of the Lomé Convention, the European Community has allocated over one billion ECU in aid for the period 1996-2000 to island developing States in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

The European Union is committed to further developing and strengthening its relationship with the countries of the Caribbean. In the years to come, we will work together on a new partnership, through qualitative progress in political dialogue, economic relations and cooperation. In this connection, we will continue to attach particular importance to the Caribbean Community and its ever closer links and interaction with the United Nations.

The members of the European Union have therefore sponsored the draft resolution before us, which we hope will be adopted by consensus.

**Ms. Aguiar** (Dominican Republic) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I am honoured to make this statement as Chairperson of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States for the month of October.

The history of the Caribbean region has been characterized by survival through resistance to various forms of adversity and by willingness to face difficult situations. For this reason, the commonly held perception of the Caribbean region as a theatre of operations where nations struggle to conquer territories and to open markets, but also as a region where the terrible forces of nature make themselves felt with tenacious and methodical regularity — all this has become part of our history as well.

The world events of the last 20 years have been very meaningful for the Caribbean's prospects of cooperation and development. These events have also brought about fundamental changes in the areas of politics, economics and trade relations and in international organizations themselves. Our Latin American and Caribbean region, as part of the world community, has felt the influence of those events and has adjusted the ways in which its internal and external relations are organized to the circumstances that prevail in this new age.

These are more than sufficient reasons for our Latin American and Caribbean region to welcome and support draft resolution A/53/L.15, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community". The Latin American and Caribbean region understands that instructions from the General Assembly such as those in resolution A/51/16 of 11 November 1996 contribute to greater exchanges of information, cooperation and technical assistance between the international community of nations and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

One of the shared priorities of the Caribbean region is that of striving to consolidate national measures to face and develop a new future defined by a process of economic growth on a sustainable basis that guarantees an improvement in the quality of life and the preservation of natural resources, especially those of the Caribbean Sea, *mare nostrum*.

The United Nations Secretary-General's report (A/53/275) of 18 August 1998, gives us an account of the significant Cooperation Agreement signed between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and of CARICOM, on the occasion of the First General Meeting between Representatives of CARICOM and of the United Nations system, which took place here at United Nations Headquarters on 27 and 28 May 1997. This kind of agreement makes it clear that there can be new spheres of cooperation, which we believe should be explored and developed more systematically and extensively.

Thanks to the signing of these agreements, it has been possible to develop an exchange of cooperation and technical assistance between the United Nations and the countries of CARICOM, despite the existing limitations in terms of financial and human resources.

In this regard, allow me to highlight some of these cooperation exchange programmes. First of all, cooperation between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and CARICOM stresses the eradication of poverty by assisting the Governments of the Caribbean region in their endeavours to implement national plans, strategies and policies in the area of poverty eradication. Furthermore, bearing in mind that the region is prone to natural disasters, UNDP, in collaboration with the Organization of American States and other organizations, continues to support the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency. In addition, UNDP has commissioned studies on the subject of good governance and development, intended to

stimulate debate and foster dialogue on the broad range of questions relating to good governance from a Caribbean perspective.

There was also a formal arrangement for assistance and support from the United Nations Environment Programme to the CARICOM secretariat for the preparation and convening of the Caribbean Sea Forum, held in Trinidad and Tobago from 2 to 6 June 1998 as part of the celebration of the Year of the Ocean.

There has been stepped-up cooperation between the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and CARICOM, with a view to securing regional coordination in the area of drug control. CARICOM's active participation in the Second Regional Meeting on Drug Control Coordination and Cooperation in the Caribbean, held in Santo Domingo on 8 and 9 December 1997, is an example of the exchange of joint regional cooperation to which I referred earlier.

Lastly, we wish to mention the cooperation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women in the form of studies presented as papers during the twenty-second meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians, held in Saint Lucia from 4 to 7 November 1997, on measuring unwaged work for possible inclusion in Caribbean national accounts.

As we have seen, the relations of cooperation between the United Nations and CARICOM have been changing, political and economically. The Caribbean region is mindful of the need to make use of the innovative capacity of its internal structures to bring about changes that will take the Caribbean region along a new path of economic progress and prosperity, thus enabling it to guarantee reliable democracy for its countries.

But the Caribbean cannot do this alone. That is why, in my capacity as Chairperson of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, I take this opportunity to invite Member States to adopt by consensus draft resolution A/53/L.15, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community".

**Miss Durant** (Jamaica): My delegation wishes first of all to associate itself with the statement delivered earlier by the Permanent Representative of Guyana, on behalf of the member States of the Caribbean Community, on agenda item 23, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Jamaica is particularly pleased that, since this item was last considered by the General Assembly at its fifty-first session, the relationship between CARICOM and the United Nations — a relationship on which CARICOM States place great store — has been further formalized.

We welcome the signing of the cooperation agreement between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Caribbean Community in May 1997 and hope that it will result in more structured collaboration between the two organizations. We share the view of the United Nations Secretary-General that this important event has ushered in a new era of partnership, one which we expect will be more productive and more meaningful.

Jamaica therefore welcomes the report of the Secretary-General, contained in document A/53/275 and Addendum 1, which gives a comprehensive account of the many activities undertaken over the past two years and also points to areas in which continued collaboration would be most fruitful. We note with satisfaction the wide range of United Nations bodies engaged in cooperative activity with CARICOM and fully endorse the programmes of work being pursued.

I wish to highlight some of the programmes mentioned in the report, to which Jamaica attaches particular importance.

CARICOM-United Nations collaboration on the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) has been particularly useful. Apart from the technical assistance provided to member States at the national level, the United Nations Development Programme has undertaken a range of projects at the subregional level, working alongside Caribbean institutions like the University of the West Indies Centre for Environment and Development and the Caribbean Conservation Association. The directory of experts on small island developing States and the small island developing States information network, established within the Regional Caribbean Capacity 21 Programme, are among the more valuable projects. The establishment of the Small Island Developing States Network (SIDSNET) has already enhanced communications among island communities worldwide about issues relating to sustainable development.

The Port of Spain Office of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) also continues to make a significant

contribution by sharing with CARICOM the responsibilities of the interim secretariat for the implementation of the small island developing States Programme of Action in our subregion. Worthy of special recognition is the technical support which ECLAC gave to the Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on the Programme of Action for the SIDS follow-up, held in Barbados in November 1997. Jamaica, with the rest of CARICOM, looks forward to continued support for the Barbados Programme of Action as well as for the follow-up of other global conferences.

I also wish to mention the importance my delegation attaches to collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme, in particular its Regional Seas Programme, and with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT), as well as with other organizations in the area of disaster preparedness and natural disaster reduction.

Cooperation between the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and CARICOM on regional drug-control initiatives is another area of meaningful cooperation. UNDCP was an important actor in the preparation of the Barbados Plan of Action for drug control coordination and cooperation in the Caribbean. The Caribbean Drug Control Coordination Mechanism has pursued a very active programme with CARICOM institutions and member Governments and Jamaica wishes to express its sincere appreciation for the substantial support for national and regional anti-narcotic initiatives which we continue to receive through such cooperation.

Another important area of CARICOM-United Nations cooperation is the assistance provided for the establishment of the CARICOM single market and economy. In addition to the design of the legal framework and facilitation of the consultative process, technical assistance for the strengthening of the technical negotiating capacity of the member States has been very useful. Jamaica looks forward to continued support in this area as the countries of the Caribbean pursue deeper subregional integration and prepare to participate in wider regional integration processes.

Looking to the future, an important area on which CARICOM has placed great emphasis for the achievement of sustainable development is that of capacity-building. We therefore hope that the United Nations project on assistance to public administration systems at the central and local governmental levels will result in greater efficiency and effectiveness in the public sectors throughout the Caribbean.

The heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, at their 18th Conference held in Montego Bay in 1997, resolved to ensure through our education systems the nurturing of the development of each person's potential without regard to gender; the development of a culture of entrepreneurship; research and development as a way of life and as a means of improving production; and improvement of the competitiveness of those industries on which our economies are based. This commitment is central to our strategy for the development of creative and productive citizens of the twenty-first century.

We recall that Secretary-General Kofi Annan, addressing the University of the West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica, in April 1998, stressed that

> "education not only enriches a culture; it is the first condition for freedom, democracy, and sustainable development".

We in the Caribbean look to the United Nations to support our aspirations in this regard.

Jamaica expresses its satisfaction with the progress of cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community. We have therefore joined in cosponsoring draft resolution A/53/L.15 and commend it to this Assembly for adoption by consensus.

**Mr. Cho** (Republic of Korea): My delegation would like to extend its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), as contained in document A/53/275 and Addendum 1.

We note with satisfaction that, over the last two years, a wide range of activities has been undertaken to strengthen cooperation between CARICOM and various arms of the United Nations system, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). Moreover, we appreciate that the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the focal point for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, is maintaining a list of United

Nations focal points, facilitating a more pragmatic and cost-effective cooperation with CARICOM.

During the two years under review, one of the most remarkable developments was the signing of a cooperation agreement between the two organizations during the First General Meeting between Representatives of CARICOM and its Associated Institutions and of the United Nations system, held in May 1997. We welcome this development, as it lays a solid foundation for further enhancing the cooperation already existing between the two organizations, and it signals a diversification in cooperation in various fields, such as peace and security, sustainable development and human rights.

In this connection, my delegation hopes that the Second General Meeting between CARICOM and the United Nations system will be held in 1999 in the Caribbean region in order to assess progress in the implementation of the agreed areas and to discuss additional measures to intensify cooperation between the two organizations.

As we learn lessons from our history, peace and stability turn out to be essential elements for sustainable development. Therefore, my delegation welcomes the efforts of the Secretary-General for greater interaction and cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, including CARICOM, in the field of conflict prevention. We hope that these efforts will continue to be promoted and expanded through follow-up meetings between the United Nations Secretariat and the secretariats of the regional organizations in the area of early warning and conflict prevention.

As we approach the twenty-first century, the world finds itself moving towards becoming a single global village. Although the geographical distance is great between the Republic of Korea and the Caribbean region, cooperative relations have been forged and expanded between the two. We have paid significant attention to the interests of small island countries, and the Caribbean countries in particular, in their strenuous endeavours for economic, social and political development.

It is in this context that the Republic of Korea has been making consistent efforts to strengthen its bilateral ties with the countries in the Caribbean region through the promotion of trade, investment and greater exchanges, including technical assistance. We have also actively participated in the international community's efforts to strengthen the democratic process and the protection of human rights in the region, particularly through participation in the UNDP trust fund for a police programme in Haiti. Despite the daunting task of overcoming the current financial crisis, the Republic of Korea will continue to make active contributions to the efforts of the CARICOM countries in promoting peace and prosperity by sharing our own experience in democratic and economic development.

The twenty-first century will see a more interdependent world as a result of the rapid development of technology and globalization. Regional integration and cooperation will be pervasive, transcending the borders of States. In this context, we believe that cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, such as CARICOM, should be further strengthened and intensified in the coming years.

In line with the objectives of the United Nations, these two bodies can bring their vast experience and expertise to the task of fostering peace and security, sustainable development and friendly relations among States in the region through cooperation and coordination of their strengths. For our part, the Republic of Korea, which has a long-standing friendship with many CARICOM countries, will continue to support CARICOM's efforts to that end.

In conclusion, the Republic of Korea, as a sponsor, strongly supports draft resolution A/53/L.15, and we hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

**The Acting President**: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/8 of 16 October 1991, I call on the Observer for the Caribbean Community.

**Mr. Marville** (Caribbean Community): I wish, on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), to express thanks to the United Nations agencies and to those countries which assisted the countries of the region most severely struck by the passage of hurricane Georges. Their assistance was deeply appreciated and once again confirmed to us in the region their degree of friendship and the place which our small area of Caribbean States holds in the international community. At the same time, I wish to express our concern and hope that those countries affected by the passage of hurricane Mitch will enjoy a similar level of support, thus enabling them to adjust rapidly following that onslaught.

I also wish to state how deeply distressed the Community has been over the seemingly mindless

atrocities being carried out in Kosovo. The Community will continue to monitor the situation there and support the international community in its efforts to bring peace to that area. The most recent news from Kosovo, fortunately, offers us a ray of hope.

At the same time, the Community wishes to express its confidence that the agreement recently entered into between Israel and the Palestinians will remain a binding instrument. In the Caribbean Community we have always attempted, both as separate States and as a region, to contribute to world peace and stability in support of and in collaboration with the United Nations.

Two years ago, a similar resolution to that which is now being considered was adopted in this forum. The Caribbean Community welcomed the support given to that resolution then, as it now looks forward to support for today's draft resolution.

Our Community States place great reliance on multilateral systems and rules. We expect those rules to take into consideration the various levels of development in the sovereign States which comprise the international community. In no international race does the amateur seriously compete with the professional; in no international competition does the lightweight compete with the heavyweight. Differences are recognized and concessions provided. When, therefore, representatives of countries speak of a level playing field, we ought to be certain that the playing field is indeed level.

The Caribbean Community thus calls on the members of the international community once again to recognize the critical need for the small, vulnerable States of the Caribbean to be able to continue to benefit unfettered from the provisions of the European Union banana regime. Our European partners have made every effort to be compliant with the World Trade Organization, yet new challenges threaten. The Caribbean Community calls particularly on its special friends in this international community, whichever continent they are from, to support it on this issue.

Another issue of concern to the Caribbean Community, one for which it is attracting a fair amount of support from United Nations agencies and States and groups of States of the Organization, is the issue of the illicit trafficking in drugs and small weaponry. The Caribbean Community remains pleased at the level of cooperation and support it is receiving in this area, but at the same time it calls for greater efforts to be made in programmes for drug demand reduction.

As a community devoted to having the Caribbean Sea internationally recognized as a special area in the context of sustainable development, the Community also looks forward to the support of the United Nations and the international community in developing this concept and having it adopted at a future meeting of the General Assembly.

A number of critical issues facing CARICOM, and their resolution, may in many ways amount to a redefining of the Community itself and of the way it conducts its affairs. These include the CARICOM initiative to help bring about a resolution to the post-December electoral political crisis in Guyana. This process, which is continuing and which continues to benefit from the resources of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has marked a new development by CARICOM as it continues to support democracy in the hemisphere and to promote conflict prevention. Similar assistance was also provided by UNDP to Saint Kitts and Nevis as the nationals of that country pondered issues related to the secession of Nevis from the federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

These issues, the menace of drug trafficking and other examples of problems of this sort in the region, suggest that the region cannot, and must not, be complacent on the issue of democracy, but must actively seek to strengthen the democratic procedures which for many years have made us proud. The Charter of Civil Society of the Caribbean Community, which has been adopted Community-wide, provides the normative moorings for the Governments and governed of the Community. The Assembly of Caribbean Community Parliamentarians needs to be strengthened to allow for much more cross-territory discourse on issues affecting our region, including the democratic process.

In July 1997, heads of Government of the Caribbean Community agreed to accept the application by the Republic of Haiti for membership in the Caribbean Community. While remaining concerned over the political impasse which continues to exist in that country over the election of a Prime Minister, the Community continues to meet with Haiti, at a technical level, to work out the terms and conditions of Haiti's membership. The expanded Community will continue to require the assistance of the United Nations and the Member States in pursuing its developmental activities.

Important among these is the establishment of a Caribbean single market and economy. Work is continuing apace to ensure that the single market becomes a reality on 1 January 1999. Four of the nine protocols to allow for this substantial transformation of the Caribbean Community have been signed and have provisionally entered into force. Once again we wish particularly to thank UNDP for the level of assistance rendered in this critical process. It is internally intended to achieve economies of scale by creating a single economic space, rather than having several small economies. The single market will not promote a closed market but instead a market well suited to investment and trade.

In order to benefit from the opportunities which will be derived from this, the Community will be looking to the United Nations and countries of the international community to promote the development of its human resources, particularly in fields which will allow it to be more competitive in the new world economic environment.

In this context, the Community looks forward to its participation in the 1999 small island developing States review conference. We have already advanced our preparatory process, and we eagerly await the discussions which will take place at that meeting.

Our Community faces many challenges at this time. Through experience we know that we can count on the United Nations and its specialized agencies for support in meeting and benefiting from these challenges.

In supporting the draft resolution, the Caribbean Community pledges to continue in its support, particularly in the regional context, for the aims and objectives of the United Nations.

**The Acting President**: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/53/L.15.

I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has become a sponsor.

I call on the representative of the Secretariat.

**Mr. Mustafa** (Chief, General Assembly Servicing Branch): I should like to inform the General Assembly that should the Assembly adopt draft resolution A/53/L.15, there will be no programme budget implications.

**The Acting President:** May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/53/L.15?

*Draft resolution A/53/L.15 was adopted* (resolution 53/17).

**The Acting President:** May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 23?

*It was so decided.*

*The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.*

United Nations A/53/PV.50

# General Assembly
Fifty-third Session

*Official Records*

**50**th plenary meeting
Monday, 2 November 1998, 10 a.m.
New York

*President*: Mr. Opertti . . . . . (Uruguay)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

**Reports of the Fifth Committee**

**The President** *(interpretation from Spanish)*: This morning, the General Assembly will first consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 125, 136 and 140.

If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee that are before it today.

*It was so decided.*

**The President** *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote or position.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Committee have been made in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we shall proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee, unless the Secretariat is notified otherwise.

**Agenda item 125**

**Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/544)**

**The President** *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

*The draft resolution was adopted* (resolution 53/18).

I call on the representative of Morocco on a point of order.

98-86272 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

**Mr. Medina** (Morocco) (*interpretation from French*): I should like to draw attention to a small error in the language used in the first paragraph of the French text of the draft resolution. My delegation would like that error to be corrected.

**The President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): That will be taken care of.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 125.

**Agenda item 136**

**Financing of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/545)**

**The President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

*The draft resolution was adopted* (resolution 53/19).

**The President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 136.

**Agenda item 140**

**Financing of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/546)**

**The President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

*The draft resolution was adopted* (resolution 53/20).

**The President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 140.

**Agenda item 49**

**Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)**

**The President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to inform representatives that, following consultations regarding agenda item 49, "Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)", and taking into account General Assembly decision 52/409 of 10 November 1997, it is proposed that the General Assembly decide to postpone consideration of this item and to include it in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fourth session.

May I therefore take it that the Assembly, taking into account decision 52/409, wishes to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fourth session?

*It was so decided.*

**The President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 49.

**Agenda item 20** (*continued*)

**Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance**

**(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions**

**Draft resolution (A/53/L.17)**

**The President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): We shall now take action on draft resolution A/53/L.17, entitled "Emergency assistance to Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/53/L.17?

*Draft resolution A/53/L.17 was adopted* (resolution 53/1 C).

**The President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 20.

**Agenda item 14**

**Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency**

**Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Agency (A/53/286)**

**Draft resolution (A/53/L.18)**

**Amendment (A/53/L.19)**

**The President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): I invite the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, to present the report of the Agency for the year 1997.

**Mr. ElBaradei** (International Atomic Energy Agency): The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was established with two objectives: to seek to enlarge the safe use of nuclear energy for peace and development, and to ensure, so far as it is able, that nuclear energy is used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

The pursuit of these twin objectives is more important than ever. The challenges of eradicating poverty and preserving our precious ecological heritage give rise to the need for the efficient transfer of appropriate technologies, including nuclear technology. The Kyoto Conference, the third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which raised awareness of the impact of greenhouse gas emissions on climate change, highlighted the necessity to use environmentally benign sources of energy. And the recent nuclear weapon tests made it clear that the international community must accelerate its efforts towards nuclear arms reduction and nuclear disarmament.

The General Assembly has before it the IAEA annual report for 1997. In this statement, I will focus on the priority work of the Agency under three headings: the contribution to peace and security; cooperation for development; and meeting global challenges in the fields of energy, the environment and nuclear safety. I will conclude with a description of the process of review and reform that I have initiated to ensure that the Agency is responding efficiently and effectively to the needs and priorities of its member States.

As noted by the Secretary-General in his recent statement to the First Committee, global nuclear disarmament must remain at the top of the international agenda. The United Nations has worked for over half a century to eliminate nuclear weapons everywhere and to oppose their acquisition anywhere. Through its verification and safeguards system, the IAEA endeavours to provide the necessary assurance that States are complying with their nuclear non-proliferation and arms control commitments. Over 180 States have undertaken to accept comprehensive IAEA safeguards.

To be effective, a verification system should provide a high degree of assurance that States are in full compliance with their obligations. As we learned in the case of Iraq, such a system must be able not only to verify declared nuclear activities but also to detect possible undeclared activities at an early stage. This is the main objective of the Model Protocol Additional to Safeguards Agreements which was adopted by the IAEA Board of Governors in May 1997.

I am pleased to report progress in the conclusion of additional protocols. To date, additional protocols for 33 States and parties to safeguards agreements have been approved by the Board of Governors. A strengthened safeguards system is a fundamental requirement for an effective non-proliferation regime. Adherence should be global. I would hope that by the year 2000 all States will have signed and brought into force their additional protocols. When this happens, a comprehensive safeguards agreement with an additional protocol will become the standard verification norm for the twenty-first century.

While the introduction of the strengthened safeguards system is proceeding well, in two special cases Agency safeguards activities are meeting difficulties.

The present status of the Agency's activities in Iraq is described in my report to the Security Council (S/1998/927). As the report notes, the Agency's verification activities in Iraq have resulted in a technically coherent picture of Iraq's clandestine nuclear programme. In the course of these verification activities, all of Iraq's known nuclear-weapons-related assets have been destroyed, removed or rendered harmless. As a result,

there are now no indications of Iraq's having retained any physical capability — facilities or hardware — for the production of weapon-usable nuclear material in quantities of any practical significance.

This statement is made on the basis of all available credible information. This same information provides no indication that Iraq has assembled nuclear weapons with or without fissile cores. However, there is an inevitable degree of uncertainty in any countrywide verification process which precludes providing absolute assurances of the absence of readily concealed material or equipment. Although we have identified the facilities, materials and equipment that comprise the big picture, it is beyond the capability of any countrywide verification process to discover all items. The Agency's thorough and wide-ranging verification activities provide credible assurance that little has been overlooked. But credible assurance is not the same as a so-called clean bill of health.

There are a few outstanding questions and concerns, but from a technical point of view they do not provide any impediment to the full implementation of the Agency's ongoing monitoring and Verification (OMV) plan. If Iraq resumes and maintains full cooperation, the Agency will be in a position to carry out all of its activities under the OMV plan, which include the right, on the basis of any information that comes to its attention, to continue to investigate the few remaining outstanding questions and concerns and any other aspect of Iraq's clandestine nuclear programme and to neutralize any items discovered through such investigation.

The techniques and procedures used in OMV are essentially the same as those used to detect, verify and, as necessary, neutralize the components of Iraq's clandestine programme. For that reason, OMV activities in Iraq would be largely unaffected by a Security Council determination on Iraq's compliance with its obligations under resolution 687 (1991).

All of the above, however, is predicated on Iraq's resumption of cooperation and the restoration of the Agency's right to full and free access. Without such access the Agency cannot fully implement its OMV plan. The OMV plan is an integral whole and can only be meaningfully implemented in its entirety. It must incorporate a robust detection and deterrence capability so as to provide substantial assurance of the absence of prohibited activities and material in Iraq. Our current inability to inspect new sites seriously weakens the OMV plan and the assurances the Agency is able to give.

In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Agency continues to assert its right to perform inspections under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) comprehensive safeguards agreement, which remains in force. At the same time, since 1992 and at the request of the Security Council, we have been verifying a freeze of the graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities in accordance with the Agreed Framework between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

While the Agency has been able to verify the freeze, it continues to be unable to verify the correctness and completeness of the initial declaration of nuclear material by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and hence unable to conclude that there has been no diversion of nuclear material. This is because the Democratic People's Republic of Korea accepts Agency activities solely within the context of the Agreed Framework and not under its safeguards agreement.

Little progress has been made in 11 rounds of technical discussions between the Agency and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. During the most recent round in October, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea provided a list of documents which, in its view, should be preserved for the Agency to be able to verify the nuclear material declaration of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at a future date. The list is not complete. Since 1995 our efforts to secure access to the necessary information and to agree on the required measures for the preservation of the documents have been futile. Unless all relevant information is made available, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, for the Agency to verify in the future the correctness and completeness of the declaration of nuclear material by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has repeatedly linked progress in discussions with the Agency to progress in the implementation of the Agreed Framework and the construction of the two light water reactors. I should like to recall in this connection that under the Agreed Framework the Agency must have verified the compliance of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with its safeguards agreement before any key components of the light water reactors under construction are delivered.

In addition to a complete ban on nuclear testing, two actions have always been identified as indispensable to nuclear arms reduction and nuclear disarmament: freezing

the production of fissile materials for weapon purposes and the gradual reduction of stockpiles of such materials. I am pleased to note that measures are being taken in both areas.

In August the Conference on Disarmament finally agreed to commence negotiation of a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. In furtherance of General Assembly resolution 48/75 of 1993, I wrote to the President of the Conference on Disarmament to offer, if requested, the assistance of the Agency in developing the technical verification arrangements for such a treaty.

Over the past two years the Agency's Secretariat has been involved in discussions with the Russian Federation and the United States of America to develop modalities for possible IAEA verification that nuclear material transferred from the military sector in the two countries remained irreversibly in the peaceful sector. Progress was made in September, when I met with Minister Adamov of the Russian Federation and Secretary Richardson of the United States of America to set goals for future work.

The Agency stands ready to contribute its verification and safeguards expertise and experience to the full realization of these initiatives. An important question that still needs to be addressed, however, is financing. In response to a request from the Board of Governors, the Secretariat is preparing an options paper on this subject. In my view, the possible establishment of a nuclear arms control verification fund based on an agreed scheme of assessed contributions could be a viable option to finance these initiatives and possibly the verification of other nuclear arms control and reduction measures.

Nuclear-weapons proliferation and threats to public safety could also arise from illicit trafficking in nuclear material and other radioactive sources. Of the nearly 300 incidents in the Agency's illicit trafficking database, some 130 involve nuclear material. However, only 10 per cent of those involve highly enriched uranium or plutonium, the materials for making nuclear weapons, and then mostly in insignificant quantities. The Agency's programme in this field consists of coordinating information exchange, providing advisory services on physical protection and giving technical guidance to international organizations.

With regard to terrorism, the Agency welcomed the invitation of the General Assembly in its 1997 resolution 52/165 to assist in the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Committee assigned the task of elaborating an international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism. The General Conference of the Agency this year adopted a resolution which invited the General Assembly, in elaborating the convention on nuclear terrorism, to bear in mind the Agency's activities in the field of illicit trafficking. I am pleased that within the Working Group of the Sixth Committee which recently met on this matter a draft convention was prepared which recognizes the Agency's expertise and ongoing activities in this field. We look forward to the successful conclusion of work on this subject, and stand ready to assist.

The second area I wish to focus on is the contribution of nuclear technology transfer for development. Meeting the needs and aspirations of the world's growing population requires the application of the best available technologies. Support for nuclear technology transfer for exclusively peaceful purposes, bearing in mind the special needs of developing countries, is an integral part of the international consensus relating to the peaceful use of nuclear energy that is embodied in the IAEA Statute and the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The role of the Agency is to ensure that where nuclear technology is the most effective and appropriate technology to address a particular problem, and that where the recipient country has an adequate infrastructure to adopt and sustain such technology, the technology is transferred safely and in the most efficient and effective manner.

Nuclear techniques are usually one component of larger development programmes. Frequently they are used to gather essential scientific data for project planning or to test results. Their value lies not only in their direct impact on developmental goals but also in their contribution to making more effective the efforts of others. For this reason, partnerships with other agencies and organizations in the field of development are among the Agency's highest priorities.

Some examples of the Agency's activities are especially worth highlighting. In the area of contributing to food security, the use of biofertilizer technology to improve nitrogen fixation in soil tilled by small farmers in Zimbabwe has yielded increases in soya bean production of more than 100 per cent and in some cases up to 500 per cent, while reducing dependency on chemical fertilizers. This project is being expanded to support activities in several sub-Saharan countries, utilizing the experience and capabilities in Zimbabwe.

The use of the Agency-developed sterile insect technique (SIT) for area-wide eradication of agricultural pests is increasing. Based upon the results of first-phase activities in tsetse fly eradication on Zanzibar Island, the Agency and the International Fund for Agricultural Development are jointly supporting the Ethiopian Government in a project to eradicate the tsetse fly in the southern Rift Valley. In Jamaica, a new project to eradicate the New World screw-worm using SIT has attracted an $8 million loan from the United States Department of Agriculture.

In the area of health and life expectancy, where women and children in developing countries are most vulnerable, nuclear techniques will help evaluate an $18 million community nutrition programme in Senegal, supported by the World Food Programme and the World Bank. Joint project formulation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has led to an isotope-based study in Indonesia of the efficiency of iron and zinc supplementation to reduce anaemia and growth-faltering in infants. In cooperation with national and regional public health authorities, isotopic evaluations to improve national nutrition interventions are being introduced with IAEA assistance in five Latin American countries, targeting over 10 million women and children.

The Agency currently supports 40 national projects and four major regional projects to upgrade radiation therapy services for the treatment of cancer, and it has recently assisted the Governments of Ghana, Ethiopia, Mongolia and Namibia to open their first such facilities. This adds a new dimension to medical management in those countries.

Freshwater scarcity is a problem that could affect two thirds of the world's population by the year 2025. The Agency is contributing to meeting this challenge. Environmental isotopes and artificial tracer techniques are particularly effective in the investigation of water leakage in dams and reservoirs and in the assessment of water resources. They were demonstrated recently in identifying the origins of a serious leak in the Aoulouz dam in Morocco. In cooperation with the 24 members of the African Regional Cooperative Agreement, planning has commenced to establish a regional capability to expand the utilization of those techniques.

There is also much ongoing research and development in the area of nuclear desalination to produce potable water competitively. At the IAEA General Conference last month Member States adopted a resolution supporting the strengthening of the Agency's activities relating to nuclear desalination and to small and medium reactor development. This programme includes promoting international information exchange and cooperation and assisting developing countries in planning and implementing demonstration programmes.

I am pleased to be able to report some positive developments with respect to the Agency's Technical Cooperation Fund. This year a number of Member States have resumed their contributions, several States have made substantial payments to clear their arrears of assessed programme costs and others have contributed for the first time. I would encourage more States to follow these trends. They are a strong testament to the value of the technical cooperation programme and an encouragement for us to make it even more effective and efficient.

The last area of focus concerns energy, safety and the environment. As the international focal point for the application of nuclear science and technology, the Agency has important functions with respect to several global issues that require international cooperation. While the authority and responsibility for decision-making in the field of nuclear technology is at the national level, the implications of those decisions quite often transcend borders. I will deal with three key areas: energy for sustainable development; nuclear safety, including radioactive waste and management of spent fuel; and preserving the environment.

Energy is essential for development. Global energy demand is growing. It is projected to increase twofold to threefold for developing countries in the next 30 years, depending on the economic growth scenario. Concern about the possible impact of greenhouse gas emissions on climate change is also growing. Energy produced from fossil fuels accounts for about half of human-made greenhouse gas emissions. The challenge is to ensure that environmental concerns, as represented by the commitments made at the Kyoto Conference on Climate Change last December, are factored into national consideration of energy options.

At the end of 1997, 437 nuclear reactors operating in 31 countries provided about 17 per cent of global electricity and accounted for the avoidance of about 8 per cent of global carbon emissions. Several existing reactors are now approaching the end of their design life. Decisions must be made to extend their time in service, to replace them with new plants or to find other options.

With varying degrees of urgency, both developed and developing countries are thus faced with major energy choices to meet the needs of their growing economies and populations without unnecessarily contributing to greenhouse gas emissions. Except for nuclear or hydropower, which has limited growth potential, there are not yet any other economically viable, minimal-greenhouse-gas-emission options for baseload power generation. The extensive use of renewable resources for this purpose does not appear to be close at hand.

The choice of nuclear power and of a particular energy mix are naturally national decisions which have potential global impacts. There are compelling reasons why nuclear power, together with improved energy efficiency, greater use of renewable energy sources and clean technologies for improved use of fossil fuels, should continue to be a major component of many national energy strategies. But there are also substantial hurdles, particularly with respect to public acceptance in some countries.

The role of the IAEA is to ensure that the facts are available for the nuclear power option to be given a full and fair hearing. To this end, in close cooperation with eight other international organizations, the IAEA has developed the "DECADES" database and methodology for the comparative assessment of different energy chains and conversion technology options. The comparisons include energy demand scenarios and supply options, economic analysis, the health and environmental impacts, the risks of energy systems, and sustainable energy development. At present this methodological framework is being used by over 30 member States to evaluate independently their energy options.

The Agency is also prepared to contribute to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change third assessment report, and is working together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the World Energy Council to conduct a world energy assessment for the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, which at its ninth session in 2001 will address energy issues for the first time.

With respect to nuclear safety, I have to say that it is a global public concern. In recent years the global safety record for nuclear power plants has shown continued improvement. However, the Agency's Nuclear Safety Review for 1997 identifies events concerning management practices in power plants which provide a warning that established nuclear power programmes can experience a gradual deterioration in safety performance unless there are continuous efforts to maintain and improve safety. Some continued incidents involving radiation sources underline the need for effective safety practices in all nuclear activities. And a high degree of national vigilance is required with respect to the potential impact on nuclear safety of new developments such as the deregulation of domestic energy markets.

The IAEA's role is to develop a comprehensive nuclear safety regime that consists of three elements: international binding agreements; safety standards; and measures to provide for the application of those agreements and standards.

In recent years several important international conventions, negotiated under IAEA auspices, have helped to fill gaps in the international nuclear safety regime. These include new conventions on nuclear safety and on the safety of spent fuel management and radioactive waste management, as well as improvements to the nuclear liability regime. But we also remain alert to the possibility that there might be other areas in which the international community as a whole would benefit from binding norms. The Agency's Safety Standards Series, which covers the areas of nuclear, radiation, waste management and transport safety, represents international consensus on safety requirements and their implementation. In the present biennium we will largely complete the preparation or revision of the entire corpus of safety standards — a total of some 70 documents — to ensure that they are comprehensive, scientifically accurate and up to date.

It is not enough to adopt safety standards and measures, however; the priority is to ensure their application in an effective manner. The Agency offers a wide range of services, including several peer review services, information exchange, education and training, and coordination of safety related research and development to ensure, in all countries with nuclear programmes, that prudent safety measures and procedures are carried out effectively and efficiently. Agency safety services are key to achieving a world standard of excellence in the application of safety standards.

Also the General Conference of the IAEA has recently recognized and encouraged the Agency's activities to assist Member States to diagnose and remedy possible year 2000 computer system problems — the so-called Y2K problems — in civilian nuclear power plants,

fuel cycle facilities and medical facilities which use radioactive materials.

Decisions on the management of spent fuel and the final disposal of radioactive waste can be delayed but cannot be avoided. The quantities involved are growing. Existing and planned storage capacity will keep ahead of accumulated inventories, but there is concern that in some countries the resources will not be available to construct planned facilities. This is an area for urgent national attention and cooperation on an international or regional basis, as appropriate.

Through the assessment of different technologies and the dissemination of information, the Agency is supporting member States in properly addressing low and intermediate level waste management issues. With respect to high level radioactive waste, experts agree that technical solutions exist for its safe and permanent disposal. But progress in demonstrating these solutions has not been rapid. One of the comparative advantages of nuclear power is the small volume of wastes generated. However, this will not be perceived as an advantage until available technical solutions for safe and permanent disposal of wastes are demonstrated. The need for member States to develop disposal plans and construct facilities has thus become an urgent priority.

In this United Nations International Year of the Ocean, I would highlight the unique contribution of the IAEA Marine Environment Laboratory in Monaco to addressing the global issues of marine pollution, particularly through its active support for the United Nations Global Plan of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities. It is worth recalling that some 80 per cent of marine pollution originates from human activities on land. Monitoring and assessing the impact of land-based pollution, discharges from ships, nuclear weapons testing and dumping of hazardous wastes is one of the responsibilities of the Marine Environment Laboratory.

In October I had the pleasure of opening the new purpose-built facilities of the Marine Environment Laboratory in Monaco. In cooperation with the Principality of Monaco, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)/Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), and the International Commission for Scientific Exploration of the Mediterranean Sea, the Agency organized a major symposium on marine pollution to share the latest scientific knowledge on the sources, behaviour and impact of marine contaminants throughout the oceans of the world.

At the same time, the Agency hosted a ministerial level meeting to strengthen international cooperation in marine environmental assessment of the Black Sea region, where environmental degradation as a result of human activities has had devastating economic and social effects. The application of nuclear techniques is demonstrably the most effective and appropriate technology to assess the environmental degradation of the Black Sea.

As will be noted from the description I have given of the many urgent items which require the Agency's attention, the international nuclear agenda is growing, not shrinking. Throughout this decade the Agency has met increased responsibilities most often within the constraints of a zero real growth regular budget. But, as we seek to respond to the expectations of our member States in this period of rapid change, the gap between priorities and affordabilities is growing.

For the Agency the implications are clear. We must achieve greater efficiency wherever possible and we must check that our programmes meet the priorities of our member States.

To this end, at the beginning of this year I initiated a comprehensive three-level review process covering the Agency's management and programmes. The first level, management review, consists largely of measures to improve efficiency in three areas: policy and coordination, programme development and evaluation, and procedures and personnel. I am placing particular emphasis on the creation of a single Agency culture to ensure that the Secretariat is clear on its priorities, coordinated in its activities and efficient in its processes.

The second level comprises an external review of the Agency's overall programme by a senior expert group to assess priorities and to present recommendations on future directions. In consultation with member States, and drawing on the proposals of the senior expert group, an Agency medium-term strategy is being prepared. It will set out the Agency's overall objectives and goals for the next five years.

The importance of public understanding of the role of nuclear energy and that of the Agency means that effective public information must be an integral part of the Agency's activities. Therefore, the third part of the

review process focuses on the role and management of public information and the Agency's outreach to civil society, particularly the nuclear, arms control and development communities and the media, using the most modern and effective tools.

We live in times of change and uncertainty. Nuclear science and technology has always drawn two reactions: hope that its safe and peaceful application will help us on the path to a better future, and apprehension that its misuse could have catastrophic effects. Today, the beneficial applications of nuclear science and technology are a global reality as we seek solutions to the urgent problems of combatting climate change, preserving the environment, feeding and improving the health of growing populations and supplying the energy needed for economic growth and development. There are compelling reasons to increase cooperation for the safe and peaceful use of nuclear technology.

In this regard, the IAEA plays the central role in fostering the global sharing of the benefits of nuclear technology while assisting the international community to curb nuclear weapon proliferation and to move towards nuclear disarmament.

As is often observed, freedom from want and freedom from fear are two sides of the same coin. To the achievement of both of these objectives the IAEA is fully committed.

I would like to conclude by expressing my appreciation to the Government of Austria, which continues to be a most gracious host to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

**The President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call now on the representative of Slovenia to introduce draft resolution A/53/L.18.

**Mr. Türk** (Slovenia): My delegation welcomes the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as transmitted to the General Assembly by a note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/53/286. The report represents very thorough reflection on the wide range of issues that have been the focus of the Agency's attention over the past year.

We also greatly appreciate the introduction of the report by Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the Agency. The past year has been Mr. ElBaradei's first year in office, and we congratulate him on the way in which he is conducting the work of the Agency. Under his guidance, the Agency continues to be the principal engine for international cooperation in the use of nuclear energy for peace and development.

Nuclear energy continues to make a significant contribution to meeting the global demand for electricity. In this regard, the Agency continues to act as a forum for assessing experience and sharing ideas on national and international developments. We have witnessed the successful culmination of many years of work on the further strengthening of the international legal framework to help ensure that nuclear energy is used safely and solely for peaceful purposes. The Agency has also continued its most valuable contribution to the United Nations system's objectives of protecting the environment and promoting sustainable development, and has made significant contributions in the fields of insect pest eradication and proper water resources management.

At its meeting last September, the IAEA Board of Governors elected a representative of Slovenia as its Chairman for the 1998-1999 period. That gives me the great honour of introducing, on behalf of the sponsors, draft resolution A/53/L.18, on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The draft resolution reflects the main achievements of the Agency in key areas related to energy development, nuclear safety, verification and technology transfer. Permit me to draw the attention of members to some of them that are reflected in the draft resolution.

Safeguards agreements designed to strengthen the Agency's international verification of nuclear programmes are an important element in promoting greater confidence among States and thus contributing to strengthening their collective security. The draft resolution therefore welcomes measures and decisions taken by the Agency, in particular the Model Additional Protocol, aimed at strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the safeguards system. Thirty-two States and other parties to safeguards agreements have signed the Model Additional Protocol so far. It is to be hoped that other States and other parties concerned will soon follow suit.

The IAEA continues to play an important role in acting as a driving force in nuclear safety through its programmes and by promoting global cooperation. In this regard the draft resolution urges all States to strive for international cooperation in carrying out the work of the

Agency and welcomes the entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety.

The draft resolution further welcomes the Agency's efforts to strengthen technical cooperation activities through the development of effective programmes aimed at improving the scientific, technological and regulatory capabilities of developing countries and its efforts to encourage peaceful applications of atomic energy and nuclear techniques. These programmes contribute to achieving sustainable development in many developing countries.

The IAEA is conducting important activities in the fields of prevention, response, training and information exchange in support of efforts against illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radioactive sources. The draft resolution welcomes those measures and decides to bear in mind the Agency's activities when elaborating an international convention on the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism.

The draft resolution expresses deep concern over the continuing non-compliance of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with its IAEA safeguards agreement and calls upon that member to comply fully with it. Regarding nuclear inspections in Iraq, the draft resolution calls upon Iraq to cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency as well as to resume a dialogue with the Agency immediately.

On behalf of the sponsors — now joined by Bulgaria, Greece, Luxembourg, Monaco and New Zealand — Slovenia is pleased to put the draft resolution forward. The draft resolution is the result of a cooperative and constructive exchange of views among delegations in Vienna and here in New York. The sponsors believe that it accurately reflects the activities of the Agency in the year under review. The sponsors are also grateful to the secretariats of the International Atomic Energy Agency and of the United Nations for their help in putting this draft resolution forward. It is our hope that the draft resolution will receive wide support among the Members of the United Nations.

**The President** (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call on the representative of Iraq to introduce an amendment to draft resolution A/53/L.18, contained in document A/53/L.19.

**Mr. Hasan** (Iraq) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I have the pleasure of introducing Iraq's amendment, contained in document A/53/L.19, to draft resolution A/53/L.18, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency".

I wish first to reaffirm Iraq's position: we reject attempts to politicize the draft resolution on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The IAEA carries out an important role in the service of the international community through promoting the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and implementing the safeguards system under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We must all respect the professionalism and independence of the Agency.

Paragraph 7 of draft resolution A/53/L.18 pertains to Iraq and gives a crystal clear example of the attempts being made by some States — among them permanent members of the Security Council — to distort the conclusions of the Agency. For example, the last sentence of that paragraph says, in part:

(*spoke in English*)

> "stresses that greater transparency by Iraq would contribute greatly to the resolution of the remaining questions and concerns".

(*spoke in Arabic*)

Paragraph 19 of the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (S/1998/927) presented to the Security Council on 7 October 1998 says:

> "As previously stated, greater transparency by Iraq would contribute considerably to clarifying the few remaining questions and concerns relevant to Iraq's clandestine nuclear programme."

We leave it to the intelligence of the Members of the General Assembly to guess the purpose of changing "clarifying the few remaining questions" to "the resolution of the remaining questions and concerns".

Based on this fact, the delegation of Iraq has proposed an amendment to paragraph 7 of the draft resolution which would make it more balanced and more in line with the Agency's evaluation of the Iraqi case in its report to the Security Council on 7 October 1998. The amendment I am submitting, which I hope representatives will support, is a verbatim quotation of paragraphs 23 and 17 of the Agency's report. The quotation from

paragraph 23 confirms that the few remaining questions regarding Iraq's former nuclear programme can be dealt with through continued monitoring. From a practical point of view, this means that the requirements of implementing paragraph 22 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) concerning the nuclear question have been met. As the Agency's Director General himself indicated just a few minutes ago, paragraph 17 of the Agency's report confirms that the Agency has a technically coherent picture of Iraq's former nuclear programme and that there is no evidence whatsoever that there remains in Iraq any material potential for the production of weapon-usable nuclear material. These two conclusions, while overdue, nevertheless confirm that the Agency has carried out the task of disarmament, something which would not have been possible without Iraq's full cooperation with the Agency. I hope that representatives will consider our amendments in accordance with the logic of justice and fairness.

Finally, as our amendment has been distributed to the Assembly just this morning, I would ask that the on it be postponed until Wednesday, 4 Novembe h would give Member States ample time to consider it.

**Mrs. Arce de Jeannet** (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Mexico is grateful to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his introduction of the Agency's annual report for 1997. We note with great satisfaction that, on the fortieth anniversary of the IAEA, efforts are continuing to strengthen the international legal framework that ensures that nuclear energy is used safely and exclusively for peaceful purposes.

I would like to refer to a few of the items covered in the report. The first relates to nuclear and radiological safety. Maintaining and continuously improving the whole nuclear infrastructure is a priority for Mexico. The safe use of nuclear energy in all its applications is an imperative for the protection of national populations and territories, in addition to being a legal obligation. This task includes the strengthening of domestic capacities for the development of national standards and the evaluation of their correct application, the constant updating of new technologies and of evaluation and safety measurement equipment, as well as the application of safeguards.

I wish to place on record our commitment to strengthen the legal regime established to guarantee the global application of the basic safety principles that govern the management of radioactive wastes and spent fuel following the adoption in 1997 of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. My delegation also welcomes the adoption of the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. We are convinced that both these legal instruments will contribute to the strengthening of the preventive system. We therefore support the work being done to prepare national reports that will be examined at the first meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, which will be held in 1999.

The second subject to which I wish to refer has to do with agriculture and food. We have noted the fact that the activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency in this area cover five principal areas, among which we would particularly like to highlight the efforts of Member States in the fight against insects and other pests and for the protection of food and the environment. We express our broadest support for the continuation and strengthening of IAEA activities in these fields, as they constitute a practical application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in areas of particular importance to developing countries.

In Mexico extensive use has been made of nuclear technology for the production of sterile insects, particularly to combat the Mediterranean fruit fly and the screw worm. Mexican facilities for the production of sterile insects are among the largest and most advanced in the world, and a large part of their production is exported.

With regard to food, the Mexican National Institute for Nuclear Research has achieved the phyto-improvement of two varieties of wheat, which have been released for use on the National Register of Seed Certification. The Institute has also been operating a food irradiation plant for over 10 years now. That plant is functioning at full capacity and mainly irradiates grains and spices. We would like to emphasize the fact that, with the support of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Institute conducted a technical economic feasibility study which points to the possibility of establishing a number of food irradiation plants in central Mexico.

The third topic to which I wish to refer is technical cooperation for development. We have studied carefully the relevant section of the Agency's annual report, and

the conclusions contained therein are a source of profound concern. While the International Atomic Energy Agency has taken further measures to improve efficiency and effectiveness, in practice we see that there has been an unexpected reduction in contributions to the Technical Cooperation Fund. A situation of uncertainty now exists regarding necessary resources for the full implementation of the technical cooperation programme adopted by the Board of Governors.

Mexico has emphasized, and will continue to emphasize, that in the implementation of its mandate, the International Atomic Energy Agency needs to maintain a vital balance between safety and technical assistance activities.

Technical cooperation in the framework of the Agency is not the result of altruistic ideas or ethical imperatives. We must recall once again that international cooperation for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is a contractual counterpart to the renunciation by the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of the acquisition or development of nuclear weapons.

For this reason, we make an emphatic appeal to all the member States of the International Atomic Energy Agency to endeavour to attain the objective of $73 million in 1999 for technical cooperation financing and to maintain that level for the year 2000.

Mexico reiterates its unswerving commitment to the strengthening of the activities of the IAEA. Its four decades of existence have proved the need for an international forum to deliberate on the various uses of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and demonstrated the invaluable role that it plays in the strengthening of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. We will be participating with determination in the Agency's work in order to confront the challenges of this end of century.

**Mr. Lee See-young** (Republic of Korea): Allow me to start by expressing my delegation's appreciation to Mr. Mohammed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his comprehensive report on the activities of the Agency for the past year. I should like also to commend staff members of the IAEA secretariat for their dedication and hard work.

We recognize that the IAEA, for the past four decades, has faithfully pursued its two main objectives: promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy and preventing nuclear proliferation. The Agency has been able to expand its role in peaceful uses of nuclear energy from power generation to a wide array of industrial, medical and agricultural applications. The Agency's safeguards activities have also made significant contributions to the strengthening of a global nuclear non-proliferation regime.

My delegation appreciates the active role of the IAEA in enhancing nuclear safety worldwide through a series of initiatives to expand the legal framework governing nuclear safety.

We believe that one of the most remarkable achievements is the adoption of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management at the Vienna Diplomatic Conference in 1997 under the auspices of the IAEA. The wide adherence to, and the early implementation of, this Joint Convention will serve to avert the potential hazards of spent fuel and radioactive waste.

My delegation also welcomes the progress made so far in the implementation of the Convention on Nuclear Safety since its entry into force in 1996. Last September, the organizational meeting of contracting parties to the Convention was held in Vienna under the auspices of the IAEA to prepare for the first review meeting of the Convention in April 1999. As one of the original contracting parties to the Convention, my country is prepared to play an active role in the upcoming preparatory work for the first review meeting. In this regard, my Government has already submitted its national report pursuant to the relevant provisions of the Convention.

The Republic of Korea is now regarded as one of the major nuclear-power-generating States in the world. In August this year, we started operating two new nuclear-power-plant units, bringing Korea's total number of units in operation to 14. These units, each with a 1,000-megawatt capacity, are built according to the Korean standard nuclear power plant model. This plant model is the product of a project started in 1984 to standardize nuclear-power-plant design.

By the year 2015, the share of nuclear power in Korea's total electric power generation is expected to increase from 34 per cent to 46 per cent, while the number of units in operation will double to 28.

In other fields of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, my Government has also carried out many research and development programmes. Hanaro, an indigenously designed and constructed 30-megawatt research reactor, has been in operation since 1995. Small and medium-size reactors, such as the system integrated modular advanced reactor, are another area of our expanded research and development activities.

My country has also participated actively in the Agency's technical cooperation programmes by hosting regional training courses and international symposiums. This month, my Government will sponsor an international symposium on the advanced light-water reactor in Seoul.

My country has always strongly supported the strengthening of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and the Agency's efforts to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of its safeguards system. In view of the renewed urgency for a stronger safeguards system, as demonstrated in the cases of Iraq and North Korea, we welcome the IAEA initiative to adopt the Model Additional Protocol in 1997. We believe that the strengthened safeguards system will endow the Agency with the enhanced ability to detect undeclared nuclear activities. It is therefore encouraging that the IAEA has so far concluded additional protocols with 31 States, including three nuclear-weapon States. For its part, my Government has taken steps to incorporate the measures required under the Model Protocol into domestic laws and regulations aimed at their early implementation. My Government hopes to finalize the consultations with the Agency on the Additional Protocol at an early date.

In addition, my Government last year strengthened the State system for accounting and control of nuclear materials with a view to introducing a national safeguards inspection system. Under this system, the Government can carry out national safeguards inspections in parallel with the IAEA safeguards inspections.

Let me now turn to the North Korean nuclear issue. Since this issue became acute in 1993, the international community has continuously called upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to come into full compliance with the IAEA safeguards agreement. It is quite regrettable to hear again from the Director General of the IAEA that the Agency has not been able to verify the correctness and completeness of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's initial declaration and that no progress has been made for the preservation of relevant information which is indispensable for the verification of North Korea's past nuclear activities.

We are particularly concerned over the Agency's difficulties in preserving relevant information that it deems necessary to verify North Korea's past nuclear activities in the future. As the Director General rightly pointed out in his statement at this meeting:

> "Unless all relevant information is made available, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, for the Agency to verify in the future the correctness and completeness of the declaration of nuclear material by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea."

In spite of a series of consultations with the IAEA, North Korea persists in its non-cooperative attitude. It must be underlined once again that North Korea is without any doubt under a legal obligation as a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to fully implement its safeguards agreement with the IAEA. That agreement remains binding and in force, as was stressed in the statement by the President of the Security Council on 4 November 1994 and reaffirmed on many occasions through resolutions of the United Nations and the IAEA.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea insists that the North Korean nuclear issue should be resolved only through the 1994 Agreed Framework between it and the United States. However, as we have clearly stated on many occasions, the Agreed Framework is not a substitute for its safeguards agreement with the IAEA, nor is it intended to exonerate it from its treaty obligations.

Moreover, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea made an unambiguous commitment to nuclear non-proliferation under section IV, paragraph 1, of the Agreed Framework, by agreeing that

> "The DPRK will remain a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and will allow implementation of its safeguards agreement under the Treaty."

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea also agreed in section IV, paragraph 3, of the Agreed Framework that key nuclear components of light-water reactors will not be delivered until the Agency finalizes the verification of past nuclear activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea should therefore come forward to cooperate fully with the IAEA to preserve all

the relevant information indispensable for the verification of the correctness and completeness of its initial report.

The non-compliance of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with this treaty obligation, if left unchecked, could eventually undermine the competence and authority of the IAEA as the guardian of nuclear non-proliferation. Inaction on the part of the international community over such unprecedented non-compliance will only help weaken the nuclear non-proliferation regime itself, particularly at a time when concerted action by the international community to strengthen the regime is required more than ever.

This year again the Republic of Korea has actively participated in Vienna and New York in drafting a draft resolution on the report of the IAEA. We believe that the draft resolution contained in document A/53/L.18 reflects in a balanced manner the interests of the international community in the work of the IAEA. As one of the sponsors of this draft resolution, my delegation hopes that, as in the past, it will be adopted by an overwhelming majority.

On the threshold of the twenty-first century, we are faced with many daunting challenges to the peace, security and development of the world. However, nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy should remain among the most important and urgent priorities on the agenda of the international community for the decades to come. To this end, my Government joins the international community in reaffirming its commitment to and support for the IAEA so as to enable the organization to continue to play its unique role as guardian of the non-proliferation regime and promoter of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

**Mr. Sucharipa** (Austria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. In addition, the following States associate themselves with this statement: the Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — as well as the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

Allow me to start by expressing the European Union's gratitude for the outstanding work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and to congratulate the Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, on the remarkable work he and his staff have done during the last 12 months to prepare the Agency for the challenges of the next millennium.

The European Union believes that the IAEA can look forward to the new millennium with confidence. The Agency is widely regarded as a model international organization. This enviable position brings with it the challenge to sustain a high level of achievement and efficiency and, where possible, to do even better. The continuous quest for efficiency and effectiveness is a trademark of the IAEA, and we encourage the new Director General in his endeavours.

In this regard, the European Union welcomes the Director General's initiative in setting up a senior expert group to look at all aspects of the Agency's work, complemented by the work of a group of senior managers in the Agency in looking at management issues. We look forward to hearing the outcome of their deliberations, and would urge the Director General to pursue vigorously those recommendations from both groups that will lead to even greater administrative efficiency. Attention should also be given to the issue of prioritization of the Agency's activities, both within and between major programmes. High-priority programmes should be fully justified. Projects that serve only a limited set of needs and interests risk unduly burdening the tight budget of the Agency.

The existence of an effective IAEA enjoying the full support of its member States is essential for the entire international community, as the Agency has a key role to play in helping humanity to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks emanating from nuclear sciences and their applications. The risk of nuclear technology being misused to contribute to the proliferation of nuclear weapons represents one of the fields in which the Agency's expertise is constantly needed. The recent nuclear tests undertaken in South Asia have highlighted the importance of global efforts.

The European Union expresses its deep concern over the situation in South Asia. The nuclear tests by India and Pakistan have damaged stability in the region and isolated both countries from the international community's non-proliferation efforts. The Union has repeatedly condemned those tests, called on both countries to adhere to the international non-proliferation regime and strongly urged India and Pakistan to refrain from further nuclear tests and from the development, assembly or deployment of nuclear weapons and/or ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear warheads.

The European Union has taken due note of statements by both sides regarding moratoriums on further nuclear tests. The European Union welcomes the apparent intention of India and Pakistan to adhere to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). They should sign and ratify the Treaty swiftly and unconditionally.

India and Pakistan should also adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as it stands. The European Union welcomes the intention of India and Pakistan to contribute to the negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on Disarmament. We now urge both countries to introduce moratoriums on fissile material production while a treaty is negotiated.

We urge both countries to legislate to exert stringent controls over the export of material, equipment and technology controlled under the Nuclear Suppliers Group trigger and dual-use lists and the Missile Technology Control Regime Annex.

*Mrs. Osode (Liberia), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

The European Union welcomes the 23 September agreement by India and Pakistan to resume the dialogue between them on all outstanding issues, particularly on all matters pertaining to peace and security. The Union stands ready to contribute to efforts to promote regional stability.

Following the successful conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1996, which constituted an important step on the way towards the implementation of the principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, the European Union has been active, and it will continue to be active, in promoting the early entry into force of the Treaty and its universality. The European Union welcomes the fact that 150 countries have signed the Treaty and that 21 have ratified it. It calls on all States to sign and ratify the Treaty, especially those 44 States whose ratification is needed for the Treaty to come into force. The Union also fully supports the efforts by the Preparatory Commission to establish the Treaty's verification regime in a timely and effective manner.

Now that the CTBT negotiations have been successfully concluded, the realization of the second measure under the action programme contained in the decision on principles and objectives is called for. This involves the immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations on a non-discriminatory and universally applicable convention banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices — the fissile material cut-off treaty. Therefore, Austria, as the current President of the European Union, put forward a draft decision on the cut-off treaty at the beginning of the 1998 session of the Conference on Disarmament. The Union heartily welcomes the achievement of consensus on the basis of the Shannon Report and the mandate contained therein and the decision to establish an Ad Hoc Committee to negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We have frequently reiterated the importance of such a treaty, which will constitute a significant contribution to the achievement of both nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. We urge all States to introduce or maintain a moratorium on fissile material production for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices pending the conclusion of these negotiations. We look forward to making our contribution to substantial negotiations, which should start at the beginning of the 1999 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

IAEA safeguards are another crucial element in combating nuclear proliferation. The Union is fully committed to the strengthening of the safeguards system. We welcomed the adoption on 15 May 1997 by the IAEA Board of Governors of the Model Additional Protocol on strengthened safeguards. On 8 June 1998 the Council of the European Union authorized the Commission to conclude the three additional protocols between the European Union member States, the European Atomic Energy Community and the IAEA. The agreement was signed on 22 September 1998.

The Union calls on all States having safeguards agreements with the IAEA to conclude as quickly as possible additional protocols to these agreements on the basis of the Model Protocol on strengthened IAEA safeguards measures. This is of the utmost importance in order to send a strong and timely signal to the international community that nuclear non-proliferation and efficient legal commitments thereto have to be seen as a crucial element of global security.

In this regard, we call particularly upon India, Pakistan and Israel to conclude the additional protocols without any delay, especially in order to assume responsibilities in the field of export controls and other key elements contained in the Model Protocol. At the same time, we call upon these States to accept full-scope IAEA safeguards. The European Union notes with

interest the announcement by Cuba of its intention to enter into negotiations with the Agency on the possible adoption of some of the measures provided for in the Model Protocol.

The European Union deplores Iraq's unilateral suspension of cooperation with the IAEA. We commend the Director General of the Agency and his staff for their strenuous efforts to implement all relevant Security Council resolutions, and we welcome the IAEA report of 7 October 1998. The Union calls upon Iraq to cooperate fully with the IAEA in accordance with its obligation under the relevant Security Council resolutions and the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq and the United Nations Secretary-General on 23 February 1998, as well as to resume dialogue with the IAEA immediately. We stress that greater transparency by Iraq would contribute greatly to the resolution of the remaining questions and concerns.

We must once again reiterate that we remain deeply concerned by the continuing non-compliance of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with its safeguards agreement. We strongly urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to come into full compliance with its safeguards agreement with the IAEA without further delay and to support all non-proliferation efforts by refraining from any act that would run counter to stability in the region. In this context, the European Union reiterates its concern at the launch undertaken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 31 August. We continue to fully support the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) and the Agreed Framework, and we call on other countries to contribute to the non-proliferation objectives of the Organization.

Regarding the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, I would like to refer briefly to the Convention on Nuclear Safety. The European Union continues to stress the need to implement the highest possible safety standards, and urges all countries to do their utmost to operate all their nuclear facilities in line with existing international regulations and recommendations. The Union welcomes the ever-increasing number of States parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety and looks forward to the full implementation of the Convention.

The Union would like to restate its position on the amendment of article VI. Members of the European Union see no need to change the existing size of the Board. We are therefore not seeking expansion. Nevertheless, we are not insensitive to the concerns of other member States. For this reason, and in the interest of consensus, we support the proposal by the Chairman of the Board which provides for an extension of the Board by six members and foresees a procedure for amending article VI whereby the amendment would enter into force only once inclusion of all Agency members in one of the regional areas was assured.

The need to ensure an adequate amount of technical cooperation, and thereby to ensure that all countries have adequate access to the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, figures among the Agency's most important activities. In this regard, we recognize the need for member States of the IAEA to make voluntary contributions to the Technical Cooperation Fund in order to allow the IAEA to efficiently implement its respective programmes.

The Union attaches great importance to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. This represents a major step in the endeavour to cover the safety of all sectors of the nuclear fuel cycle by legally binding international instruments. The increasing number of States signatories to this Convention shows that the importance of this instrument is broadly recognized by the international community. We call upon all States to become parties to the Joint Convention as soon as possible, thereby allowing for its early entry into force in order to achieve and maintain a high level of safety worldwide.

One more topic which requires action on an international level is the threat represented by illicit trafficking of nuclear material. We support the Agency's preventative activities in this field and also welcome other relevant initiatives, such as the one by the G-8.

Regarding the safety of transport of nuclear material, such transport is subject to an extensive system of rules in the European Union in order to ensure the safety of these activities. Given the global nature of this topic, the Union is grateful to the IAEA for submitting a study on the international regulatory framework in the field of the safety of transport of radioactive materials, in response to the request of last year's General Conference.

There can be no doubt that in the next millennium, too, the international community will be faced with nuclear-related issues that may call for action on an international level. One is that of international nuclear law, where attention will have to be given not only to its

further development but also to the implementation or strengthening of existing instruments, particularly in the fields of safety and liability.

Furthermore, we have to be aware that an increasing number of nuclear power stations worldwide are approaching the end of their life cycle. Consequently, questions concerning the decommissioning of such plants or the extension of their life cycle will have to be given adequate attention.

Looking at the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation sectors, another likely future task of the international community has already been referred to in this statement. If, as we sincerely hope, the negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty are brought to a successful conclusion soon, the parties to such an agreement will be faced with the major challenge of implementing the verification provisions of that instrument in a way that makes maximum use of existing verification know-how and is as cost-efficient as possible. In all of the areas just mentioned, the outstanding expertise of the Agency could contribute to finding efficient and reliable solutions.

The European Union is aware of the fact that establishing long wish lists of activities the Agency might engage in is significantly easier than identifying where the means for all these undertakings are to come from. We are confident, however, that ways to finance cost-intensive additional activities of the Agency will be found when this question arises.

The willingness of member States will be all the greater in the light of the Agency's long tradition of providing value for money to its members and its continuing efforts, which we support, to achieve further economies of operation, especially in the support areas.

**Mr. McQueen** (South Africa): The year 1997 has been one of consolidation and review for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, has been very thorough in examining every aspect of the Agency's activities. The close scrutiny of all activities undertaken by the Agency and the Director General's ideas for efficiency, cost-effectiveness and value for money, in this regard, are welcomed. My delegation looks forward to the report of the panel of experts that is evaluating the activities of the Agency, and on which the Director General will base his medium-term plan.

Turning now to the specific activities of the Agency, South Africa will continue to support the Agency fully in all its activities, be they in the areas of promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, of promoting nuclear safety or of non-proliferation. For African members of the Agency, in fact, the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is particularly important. It is well known that Africa risks continued marginalization in an era of globalization. All African countries face great challenges in economic and social development. The Agency is able to contribute in a real and tangible way to sustainable development and it should be urged to examine closely how this impact can be maximized and, indeed, increased, recognizing the special needs of developing countries for technical assistance. The Agency's emphasis on the promotion of transfer of technology through technical cooperation between developing countries is clearly the way forward and the Agency can be justifiably proud of its achievements so far.

There is, however, always room for improvement, especially in the area of resources. The resources of the Agency for technical cooperation activities need to be assured, predictable and sufficient to meet the objectives of the Agency. The Technical Cooperation Fund, however, levelled off in 1997 and in a time of growing demand, especially in Africa, we run the risk of undermining the Agency's crucial work in this area. All member States should be urged to contribute to the Fund and to meet their respective targets. These contributions should be seen not as voluntary, but rather as morally obligatory.

Turning now to nuclear safeguards, my delegation welcomes the fact that a number of additional protocols, some with countries having substantial nuclear industries, have already been approved. South Africa has expressed its strong support for the strengthening of safeguards, including the Additional Protocol, and will, on completion of the wide ranging reviews of programmes and legislation which are currently taking place, also sign and ratify the Protocol. Just as the Agency is undergoing a thorough review of all its activities, so in South Africa a thorough review of our energy-related legislation and activities is taking place.

In the broader context of non-proliferation and disarmament, my delegation welcomes the establishment of the trilateral initiative between the Russian Federation, the United States of America and the Agency. Verifying that the fissile materials removed from nuclear weapons

programmes are not returned to military use will be an activity of great significance to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and my delegation is heartened at the prospect of quantifiable progress in international nuclear disarmament arising from the activities of this initiative. Crucial questions do, however, arise over and above the technical and legal challenges posed by this initiative. One challenge is the institutional implications for the IAEA of involvement in the process.

With regard to nuclear safety, South Africa is a contracting party to the Convention on Nuclear Safety and looks forward to the first international peer review meeting on country reports. My delegation believes this will be a major contribution to ensuring that adequate and harmonized standards of nuclear safety are maintained throughout the world. South Africa is, furthermore, committed to the international Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. Efforts are also continuing on the development of a national policy on radioactive waste management and South Africa will take the necessary steps towards signature and ratification of the Joint Convention.

Regarding the transportation of radioactive materials, South Africa endorses the safety standards of the IAEA. Consignors of spent fuel, plutonium and high-level waste by sea are encouraged to maintain contact with coastal States and to provide timely information on the passage of shipment within the proximity of their coasts.

With regard to the amendment of article VI of the Statute, my delegation would like to express its regret that it was not possible to agree on an expansion of the Board of Governors and is looking forward to ongoing discussions within the IAEA to find a solution to this problem. Africa's continued under-representation on the Board of Governors remains an issue of great concern.

In conclusion, my delegation believes that the IAEA is in good shape and is doing commendable work in all areas in which it is involved. My delegation will continue to give the Agency our full support and we recommend that the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution before us.

**Mr. Sharma** (India): The Indian delegation has taken note of the contents of the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), introduced by Director General Mohammed ElBaradei.

Over the last five decades, India has worked for a nuclear-weapon-free world because nuclear weapons for none means security for all. The recalcitrant approach of the nuclear-weapon States, as defined by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to work towards nuclear disarmament and our own compelling national security concerns led us this year to redefine the parameters of our security requirements. As a developing country, India hopes that the developing world notices that the countries which have chosen to vehemently criticize the recent tests are either the established nuclear-weapon States, which like to preserve their exclusive status, or are those which have already addressed their nuclear-related national security concerns of the kind India has through agreements or understandings with the nuclear-weapon States.

At the recent summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Durban, the Prime Minister of India said:

> "We do not believe now, any more than we ever did before, that nuclear weapons are here to stay. On the contrary, if the established nuclear-weapon States agree to negotiations to abolish nuclear weapons, we will be the first to join."

In this context, we welcome the call by the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement for an international conference, preferably before 1999, with the objective of arriving at an agreement before the end of this millennium, on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time.

From the point of view of developing countries, the focus of the IAEA should be on the statutory technical issues, like nuclear power, and not on extraneous political issues related to nuclear disarmament, a subject better dealt with by the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Nuclear power development takes place when there is an energy need, backed by an adequate level of industrial infrastructure. So it is not surprising that nuclear power development in the early decades was in the United States, Europe and the former Soviet Union. It is now advancing rapidly in parts of Asia, and we are sure it will soon grow in some other parts of the world.

With a view to improving the technical capabilities of developing countries in nuclear power, the IAEA, along with our Department of Atomic Energy, held an international seminar entitled Nuclear Power in Developing Countries: Its Potential Role and Strategies

for its Deployment, in India in October 1998. The seminar, which saw significant participation by experts from the IAEA and a large number of developing countries, was a success. We feel such seminars are appropriate, since developing countries have the greatest need for energy growth. They are also not allergic to nuclear power, as some developed countries tend to be, often because these developed countries have a surfeit of other forms of energy.

The Agency needs to find methodologies so that scientific cooperation in this field is not inhibited by the commercial interests of the vendors. The Agency must also be a prime mover in ensuring that safety related equipment and information on research and development in safety related issues are readily disseminated without being hindered by arbitrary and politically motivated export control regimes. Safeguards, while necessary, must obviously be confined to the respective State's obligations. The hesitation in developing countries to initiate nuclear power programmes is often due to unfamiliarity with the steps needed. A situation must not be created in which the leadership and the public in developing countries, planning to introduce nuclear power for the first time, feel intimidated by safety and threatened by safeguards. The Agency must play a key role in removing such inhibitions while, of course, ensuring perfect safety of nuclear power and implementing its safeguards responsibilities effectively and economically.

Through detailed internal reviews and consultations between professionals, technically achievable targets have been set for our nuclear programme. These reviews have recommended an installed capacity of 20,000 megawatts for nuclear power by the year 2020. India has opened options for reaching the target through accelerating the indigenous construction of pressurized heavy-water reactors and fast breeder reactors with procurement of light-water reactors from friendly countries, followed by development of light-water reactor technology. Since India has limited uranium resources and a very large thorium reserve, it is important for us to utilize the plutonium generated in the first-generation pressurized heavy-water reactors to fuel fast breeder reactors. This would lead to fuller utilization of our thorium reserves. In support of the power programme and the fuel cycle activities, a broad base for basic, applied and engineering research has been established in India. The development of mixed oxide fuel is progressing well, and both the boiling water reactors at Tarapur have been loaded with some mixed oxide assemblies.

No large nuclear programme can be launched and sustained without a strong, independent regulatory body with the authority to set internationally acceptable standards of safety. The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board of India determines the safety standards to be followed and has the authority to inspect and approve the operations of all nuclear installations. It interacts with international bodies and prescribes the dose limits in accordance with the recommendations of the International Commission on Radioactive Protection and ensures compliance. The Board is currently paying special attention to enlarging its involvement in safety research projects of relevance to regulatory decision making. It is also establishing a safety research institute. Our commitment to all aspects of safety — design and engineering safety, operational safety and regulatory safety — is total. Considerable research and development work is devoted to health, safety and environmental problems. A large number of training and retraining programmes are organized, both in cooperation with the IAEA and otherwise. It is hoped that such courses will become an annual feature and will help countries in the region in developing qualified radiation protection personnel.

India has paid considerable attention to non-power applications, including those in nuclear medicine, agriculture and industry as well as in isotope hydrology, pest control and potable water through desalination. We produce over a hundred varieties of radioisotopes. We are very glad that the IAEA is also helping in the introduction of these applications in developing countries. While these uses are important, they should not overshadow the importance of nuclear power.

Human resource development is an important component of technical cooperation activities, and the IAEA should identify centres of excellence for this purpose in the developing countries under the Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) programme. It has been our experience that in high technology areas developing countries find it easier to learn from one another because of comparable situations. India has always placed great emphasis on human resource development in nuclear science and engineering. We shall be happy to accept scientists and engineers from developing countries in these fields, either through bilateral arrangements or through the IAEA.

In conclusion, I would like to say that there is a strong need for restoring the original scientific-technical character of the IAEA. The IAEA used to be such an

organization. We must not allow it to degenerate into a shadow political forum trying to replay debates appropriate for the United Nations General Assembly. Unbiased dissemination and deployment of the vast scientific and technical knowledge that has been accumulated in the Agency through thousands of meetings and conferences should be used to meet the objectives laid out in the Statute, namely, to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world.

**Ms. Wensley** (Australia): Australia is pleased to have the opportunity to commend Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his report on the work of the Agency.

Australia attaches great importance to the central role played by the IAEA in enlarging the contribution of nuclear technology to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world, as well as its important role in helping to verify the non-proliferation commitments of the international community. The IAEA is one of the central pillars of the nuclear non-proliferation regime — of which the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone. The Agency is therefore among the international institutions which play a key role in maintaining peace and security.

Nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan have brought new and complex challenges to the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regimes. The intensity of the global reaction to those tests has highlighted the determination of the overwhelming majority of States not to allow global security to be threatened by the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The tests amply demonstrate that there is no room for complacency in combating that proliferation.

Far from undermining or weakening it, these challenges have served to emphasize the strong political will to maintain and strengthen the non-proliferation regime. The international community's resolve to advance the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime in the face of these challenges was demonstrated graphically by the decision of the Conference on Disarmament on 11 August this year to commence negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. The IAEA will of course play a very important role in the development of the verification machinery for this treaty, and we strongly support the IAEA in this regard. The commencement and conclusion of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty will provide the international community with additional reassurance against the expansion of nuclear arsenals, and will further strengthen the international non-proliferation norm, which has already been reinforced significantly by the permanent extension of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1995; the conclusion and adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996; and agreement on strengthened IAEA safeguards in 1997.

Australia welcomed very warmly the announcement in May this year by President Fernando Henrique Cardoso that Brazil had acceded to the NPT and ratified the CTBT. This is a landmark achievement which highlights the seriousness of Brazil's commitment to make every effort to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Brazil's accession to the NPT brings the number of States parties to the Treaty to 187, making it the most widely adhered to arms control treaty.

Brazil's accession brings us one step closer to universal membership of the NPT and the ultimate goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Australia calls upon the remaining few States not party to the NPT to follow Brazil's exemplary action by acceding to the Treaty. The sooner the NPT achieves universal adherence and full implementation, the safer the world will be.

Australia remains concerned about Iraq's suspension of cooperation with the IAEA, and obviously deeply concerned by the most recent developments relating to the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM). We are also concerned by the continuing non-compliance of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with its safeguards agreement with the IAEA. Iraq's action is unacceptable, and in contravention of Security Council resolutions. Australia urges Iraq to resume full cooperation with the Agency, and with UNSCOM, so that the international community can be confident that its action is not designed to conceal weapons of mass destruction.

With respect to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the lack of progress on the issue of preservation of information which must remain available to enable the Agency to verify in the future the correctness and completeness of that country's initial declaration under its safeguards agreement is a matter of deep concern. It is imperative that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea comply fully with its safeguards agreement with the IAEA.

The Agency's safeguards system provides an essential framework for managing proliferation pressures, as well as providing for a high level of cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Australia is committed to preserving and indeed strengthening the effectiveness and the efficiency of safeguards. We commend and strongly support the work of the IAEA in strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime through the conclusion of additional safeguards protocols, and the development of new safeguards measures pursuant to the protocols. Strengthened safeguards are critical to international security, as has been demonstrated by the need to be able to detect undeclared activities in countries such as Iraq and to have unambiguous assurances about the status of the nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The IAEA's programme to strengthen safeguards, following on from Programme 93 + 2, allows the Agency to provide more reliable assurances that States are complying with their non-proliferation obligations. This forms a crucial part of a dynamic and continuing process of strengthening the safeguards system, for which there is near universal support.

Parties to the NPT have a duty to ensure that their obligations under the Treaty are given effect internationally and domestically. Our respective national security interests also dictate that we do everything in our power to limit to the greatest extent possible the potential for further proliferation in all regions of concern. Australia recognizes that ultimately the efficacy of the strengthened safeguards system will depend on how soon States sign on to the Model Additional Protocol. It is essential for the protocol measures to be brought into widespread operation as quickly as possible. Australia signed its additional protocol agreement with the IAEA on 23 September 1997. We were the first country to do so. That agreement entered into force on 12 December 1997.

Fourteen protocols have now been approved by the IAEA Board of Governors. Major protocols approved at the June Board meeting included three with nuclear-weapon States — the United States, the United Kingdom and France — as well as the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) and Canada. Australia encourages all countries which have not yet done so to sign and ratify model protocols with the Agency as soon as possible to ensure that this really powerful international instrument against nuclear proliferation is made as strong as possible. We believe that achievement of that goal will return practical dividends in terms of enhanced global and regional security.

Australia also places a high priority on the IAEA's technical cooperation programme. We support the measures taken by the agency to strengthen the effectiveness of its activities in this area. We note that the technical cooperation projects proposed to the Board for 1999-2000 will meet specific design standards that include specified objectives, detailed work plans, measurable outputs and performance indicators. Those changes are expected to strengthen the Agency's ability to maximize the economic and social benefits of nuclear technology to the most needy countries. Meanwhile, Australia will contribute approximately $A 1.3 million to the Technical Cooperation Fund for the coming year.

In our view, since it was introduced in 1972 the Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (RCA) has proved to be an important and effective means of promoting cooperation in the region in a wide range of nuclear science and technology areas. In June this year we paid approximately half a million dollars to the RCA as the first of what are expected to be three payments totalling about $A 1.6 million. That was to fund our next RCA project, the application of radioisotope technology to sustainable infrastructure development in Asia and the Pacific. That project, which is very interesting, covers infrastructure support in the areas of public sector engineering, strengthening radiation protection and regional education of nuclear medicine technologists.

The Agency's continuing emphasis on the development and monitoring of nuclear safety standards is widely and strongly supported. In this area, we welcome the Director General's decision to review the Agency's overall nuclear safety strategy as a separate exercise. We also very much welcome the decision to re-examine the Nuclear Safety Review in order to give it a sharper focus in identifying and assessing specific measures which need to be taken to improve nuclear safety.

Another essential component of the non-proliferation regime is the system of nuclear export controls, such as those applied by the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Those controls facilitate transfers consistent with the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. They do not have a hidden agenda. Indeed, in the interests of transparency, the Nuclear Suppliers Group has launched a series of

seminars on the role of export controls in nuclear non-proliferation. A first seminar was held in Vienna in October 1997; a second seminar will be held just before the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in New York in April next year. Those seminars go some way to meeting the expectation at the NPT Review and Extension Conference that efforts shall be made to explain better to the international community the operation of nuclear export controls and their contribution to nuclear non-proliferation.

Australia notes that earlier this year the Director General initiated a review of the programme of activities of the Agency. We recognize the budgetary pressures under which the Agency has been operating since the imposition of zero real growth limits 14 years ago. Regrettably, this situation is compounded not only by escalating demands on the Agency's resources but also by significant levels of non-payment of contributions by a small number of Member States. It would be alleviated if Member States met their financial obligations to the Agency in full and on time. We hope the Director General's review of the Agency will produce new and innovative ideas which will assist him to map out a new vision for the future management of the Agency's programme and activities.

Finally, Australia wants to compliment the Director General for introducing changes to the Agency's policy and coordination, programme and budget formulation and evaluation, and to its procedures and personnel systems. We hope that those reforms will make a valuable contribution to strengthening the foundations of the Agency. The Director General can continue to count on my Government's constructive support for his efforts to strengthen the contribution that the Agency makes to the promotion of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and overall to the cause of international peace and security.

**Ms. Arystanbekova** (Kazakhstan): Allow me first of all to express my delegation's appreciation to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his comprehensive introduction of the report of the IAEA contained in document GC(42)/5 and for his overview of the Agency's activities in the last year. We would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Slovenia, Ambassador Danilo Türk, for introducing the draft resolution on the report, contained in document A/53/L.18, of which Kazakhstan is a sponsor.

The international community pays, and will continue to pay, the closest attention to the objectives and tasks of the IAEA in ensuring global security under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The effective mechanisms developed by the IAEA for monitoring trafficking in nuclear materials, the strengthening of the international safeguards system and the conduct of effective cooperation on issues of nuclear power, radiation safety and handling of waste have made an important contribution to the practical solution of the problems facing the international community in this area.

The IAEA's annual report, which is before us for consideration, gives a clear demonstration of the vitally important role of the Agency in solving these complex problems in accordance with its Statute and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

Kazakhstan scrupulously fulfils the international obligations it has assumed in relation to the strengthening of the existing safeguards system. The safeguards agreement between Kazakhstan and the IAEA, signed in August 1995, has entered into force and is being successfully implemented. All of the Republic's peaceful nuclear activity has been placed under IAEA safeguards. The possibility is currently under consideration of signing an additional protocol to the comprehensive safeguards agreement which will make it possible to increase the effectiveness of measures to maintain and strengthen the non-proliferation regime in the country and the transparency of our nuclear activity, and to strengthen the international community's confidence in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan welcomes the steps taken by the IAEA to prevent illicit trafficking in nuclear materials. While acknowledging the Agency's important role in supporting the efforts of Governments and in coordinating measures in this field, we nevertheless believe that the main responsibility for solving this serious problem continues to rest with member States themselves. In Kazakhstan, a State nuclear materials accountancy and control system has been established and is in operation. The activity of the Republic's enterprises in the nuclear sphere is controlled by the relevant national legislation, which defines the basic principles for regulating the activity of these enterprises and lays down the nuclear and radiation safety rules and regulations. In February 1998 a resolution of the Government of Kazakhstan approved regulations for the licensing of activity relating to the use of atomic energy which have become the main mechanism for performance of the functions of our national Atomic Energy Agency. We are compiling

databases on nuclear materials stocks, and conducting organizational measures to improve the qualifications of specialists employed in the nuclear materials accountancy and control system.

In its export policy, Kazakhstan complies with all the Agency's requirements relating to the import and export of nuclear materials. The relevant principles are reflected in the Export Control Act and the Utilization of Atomic Energy Act. We are ready to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group. In this connection, Kazakhstan has since 1997 been complying in its activity in the field of export of nuclear materials and technology with the Governing Principles of that Group.

Kazakhstan strongly supports the IAEA's efforts aimed at strengthening nuclear safety, and, as a country which possesses nuclear reactors, has since 1997 been among the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety. The reinforcement of that Convention by other international legal instruments will, in our view, facilitate the shaping of a global nuclear safety culture.

The problem of handling radioactive wastes formed as a result of economic activity associated with the exploitation of uranium and other deposits, and of the processing of wastes from the coal industry, the use of nuclear facilities and the development of nuclear power, occupies an important place in Kazakhstan's nuclear activity. In this connection, we greatly appreciate the efforts of the IAEA and its member States to draw up the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, which Kazakhstan signed last year. As a result of the adoption of that instrument, safety standards have been introduced in that sensitive sphere of activity.

The development of nuclear power plays an important role in the implementation of a set of programmes aimed at ensuring Kazakhstan's energy self-sufficiency. As far back as October 1995, the Government took a decision on the need to complete the drafting of a concept for the development of energy, including atomic energy, for the period up to 2030, and of draft legislation on the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. In March 1996, a Government working group on the construction of a nuclear power station in Kazakhstan's territory was established. A prominent place in the concept is assigned to the assessment of different types of nuclear power stations and their cost effectiveness, and to issues relating to the burial of radioactive wastes.

For the forthcoming biennium, 1999-2000, a number of projects have been included in Kazakhstan's programme of technical cooperation with the IAEA. In particular, it is proposed to conduct an analysis of the safety of the project for a new nuclear power station and the economic feasibility of constructing it in southern Kazakhstan, and to set up a low background radiological laboratory to study the situation in west Kazakhstan and to conduct a number of other projects of importance to the Republic.

Active cooperation between the Government of Kazakhstan and the Agency is continuing on a study of the radiological situation in the territory of the former Semipalatinsk nuclear testing ground, where, over a period of more than 40 years, 470 nuclear explosions were conducted, 113 of them in the atmosphere. This accounts for about 70 per cent of all the nuclear-weapons tests conducted by the former Soviet Union. The results of these joint studies are helping to determine possible ways of eliminating the consequences of the many years of nuclear weapons tests.

In implementation of General Assembly resolution 52/169 M, on international cooperation and coordination for the human and ecological rehabilitation and economic development of the Semipalatinsk region in Kazakhstan, in the spring of this year United Nations Headquarters organized an inter-agency mission, with the participation of representatives of specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations, including the IAEA. This summer the mission visited the Semipalatinsk region, where it conducted a comprehensive study of the consequences of the many years of nuclear tests. I should like to express our sincere gratitude to the IAEA experts and those from the other specialized agencies involved for their support and for their efforts to draw up a comprehensive and objective report on the true extent of the consequences of the nuclear tests in the Semipalatinsk region. We express the hope that in the future technical assistance from the Agency will grow commensurately with Kazakhstan's urgent problems in this respect.

In September this year, for the second time, an international conference on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons was held in Kurchatov, Kazakhstan. It is symbolic that an international conference on this important topic was held in a town that for many years was the centre of a nuclear testing ground. The conference, timed to coincide with the tenth anniversary of the first joint experiment in the monitoring of nuclear tests, was attended by leading specialists and experts

from Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and the United States, and also by representatives of the United Nations, the IAEA, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and the Conference on Disarmament. More than 70 statements were presented covering various aspects of the maintenance and strengthening of the non-proliferation regime, the conversion of former testing grounds, the elimination of the consequences of the tests and ensuring the radiation safety of the population and protection of the environment.

During the work of the conference, on 17 September, a demonstration calibration explosion was conducted, in the course of which, using chemical explosives, the last strategic missile launch silo was destroyed.

Today's world is unimaginable without the widespread use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. These include not only nuclear energy supply, but also many nuclear physics isotope technologies and procedures which have found their way into almost all areas of our lives. The progressive development of peaceful nuclear technologies is under way, and under these circumstances the task of maintaining and strengthening the non-proliferation regime remains, and will continue to be a topical issue.

Kazakhstan holds in high esteem the contribution of the IAEA to the strengthening of peace and security, and will always support the work of this authoritative international agency.

**Mr. Galuška** (Czech Republic): At the outset I wish to voice my country's support for the statement delivered by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union and associated countries. I shall limit my intervention to those issues which the Czech Republic considers to be of particular importance.

In September we met at the forty-second session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to assess not only what we had accomplished but also what was still left to be done. The principal mission of the IAEA remains unchanged: to promote the use of nuclear energy for the benefit of the peace, health and prosperity of mankind and to prevent its misuse for military purposes. To entirely fulfil its mandate the Agency needs to have a capable head, good management and an effective and efficient steering organ: the Board of Governors.

I am glad to say that the Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, in the course of his first year in office, has proved to be both a patient diplomatic negotiator and a skilled chief manager of the Agency. I would like to congratulate him on all his achievements and wish him full success in his future work.

As for the Board, we have had intensive and lengthy discussions on a package of closely connected issues, such as the possible size and composition of the Board, the right of member States to belong to a particular geographical group, and criteria for designating members of the Board. The Czech Republic has articulated its support for the status quo on numerous occasions. It is our opinion that the Board in its present size and composition represents one of the most effective and efficient bodies of the United Nations system. On the other hand, we understand that some member States do not share our view. In this respect, we believe that a package proposal by the Chairman of the Board comprising all aspects of the problem represents a good compromise. We welcomed the statement by the President of the forty-second IAEA General Conference urging the Board to redouble its efforts to achieve a solution to this long-standing issue pursuant to the mandate previously conferred on it by the Conference. The Czech Republic is prepared to take part in seeking a final solution.

The mandate given to the Agency by its statute becomes even more relevant in the light of the nuclear tests carried out in the South Asian region. The international community must not slacken its efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Czech Republic appeals to States which have not yet done so, particularly those with nuclear capabilities, to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, unconditionally and without delay. We also call upon the States concerned to stop their military nuclear programmes and place all their nuclear facilities under the Agency's safeguards.

There is no need to emphasize the role the IAEA plays under the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the significance of that Treaty. We took active part in the work of the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in the year 2000, where, as we have in other forums, we advocated the principle of the universality of the Treaty. The Czech Republic remains committed to the principles of the NPT and makes every effort to comply with its obligations under the Treaty.

The Czech Republic highly appreciates the finalization of the Model Additional Protocol to safeguards agreements. We believe its implementation will significantly contribute to greater transparency in the nuclear programmes of the countries concerned, and will at the same time strengthen the capability of the IAEA to detect in time all undeclared use of nuclear materials and energy for other than peaceful applications. We welcome the fact that 29 countries, including three nuclear-weapon States, have signed the Model Protocol and that one of them has already started its implementation. We share the view that the Model Protocol can become fully effective only if implemented by all States parties to IAEA safeguards agreements. It should be in the interest of member States to provide clear evidence that their nuclear programmes are of a peaceful nature.

I regret to say that the Czech Republic is among the countries whose territories are used for illicit traffic in nuclear materials. We take this problem as a growing threat — and as a challenge to seek ways and means to combat organized gangs of traffickers. We are of the view that the most effective protection against illicit trafficking in nuclear materials is the strict application of the measures of the State System of Accounting for and Control of Nuclear Material in the countries of their origin — that is, in the countries where the nuclear materials get into the hands of unauthorized persons. Mutual cooperation between the IAEA and member States should also play an important role in this field. We welcome the Agency's Programme for Preventing and Combating Illicit Trafficking in Nuclear Material, particularly the setting up of a database of cases of seizure of smuggled material by local authorities, which we see as a cornerstone of communication and early information.

As a State party to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Czech Republic has submitted its national report under the Convention in conformity with its articles 5 and 20 to be reviewed by the Convention's review meeting in April 1999. Our report provides comprehensive information on the existing legal framework, comprising the Atomic Act and related implementation regulations, as well as a case study on nuclear power plants, carried out under the Convention.

In line with its long-term policy in the field of the safe management of radioactive waste and spent fuel, the Czech Republic has signed the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. We attach great importance to that Convention and consider it to be a fundamental, legally binding instrument introducing the highest safety standards also to this very sensitive area. I would like to call upon the States which have not yet become party to the Joint Convention to sign and ratify it, thus enabling its early entry into force.

Let me now touch upon the issue of IAEA technical assistance and cooperation. As I have already mentioned here, the mandate of the Agency, anchored in its statute, is to promote worldwide peaceful uses of nuclear energy in all spheres of human activity. This mandate can be discharged only by means of effective, result-oriented, cost-efficient programmes of technical cooperation and assistance on the one hand and of predictable financial resources on the other. It is in the hands of member States how the target figures proposed for the Technical Cooperation Fund will be met. States should shoulder their responsibility and pay their Fund pledges in full and on time.

In conclusion, allow me to express once again our high esteem for the work of the Agency and our wishes for much success in the future.

**Mr. Granovsky** (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): My delegation is grateful to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his introduction of the annual report of the Agency, which provides a very detailed description of IAEA activities.

The Russian Federation has consistently supported the effective activities of the IAEA. We want the Agency to remain an international organization with a strong reputation in the sphere of nuclear affairs, one that actively promotes the development of the peaceful uses of atomic energy to serve the urgent needs of the international community and that carries out verification activities which in turn are the key element of the regime for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The international community has recently made substantial progress in resolving the main tasks of maintaining global and regional security. At the same time, we consider that the current necessity for a comprehensive strengthening of the nuclear weapons non-proliferation regime is the key aspect for ensuring nuclear safety and security.

Given the current difficult situation at a time when the existing regime has been seriously tested, Russia — as one of the depositaries of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) —

unequivocally confirms the constancy of its position in respect of the basic principles of the Treaty. In this context, we consider it of great importance that the Conference on Disarmament has decided to establish an Ad Hoc Committee which shall, on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator and the mandate contained therein, negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

One serious problem concerns the use of fissile materials that have been declared as no longer being needed for defence purposes. Russia proceeds on the basis that disengaged nuclear materials should be used first of all in nuclear power production. We have therefore initiated and are successfully carrying out a number of international projects aimed at producing a detailed technical and economic analysis of the problems in this area. The intergovernmental agreement between Russia and the United States on science and technology cooperation in the field of the treatment of plutonium removed from nuclear military programmes plays a significant role in those efforts.

Transparency in the sphere of the use of materials removed from weapon programmes is a new type of work for the Agency. In this regard, the joint work of Russian, American and IAEA experts within the framework of the 1996 trilateral initiative concerning the application of the Agency's verification procedures to weapon-grade fissile materials claimed as redundant for defence purposes is of great importance.

We are glad to note that since the beginning of its activities the Agency has deservedly enjoyed the high reputation of a competent international organization in the nuclear field and has been making all necessary efforts to assist Member States in developing their nuclear power production capacities. We find the Agency's activities in rendering technical assistance to developing countries to implement priority programmes in the sphere of the peaceful use of atomic energy to be of the greatest importance. Despite the economic difficulties facing Russia, we are now participating in the IAEA's technical cooperation programme by supplying equipment and organizing and conducting training courses and field work for experts from developing countries.

Russia regards the use of an enormous research potential, formerly the exclusive prerogative of military programmes, as one of the areas of nuclear power development related to the reduction in and utilization of nuclear weapons. We view the Agency's role in this regard as coordinating international cooperation with a view to choosing an economically sound and environmentally safe use of weapon-grade materials in civilian nuclear-fuel cycle.

The future of nuclear power is inextricably linked with the need to meet ever-growing safety requirements. We believe it is important to further develop the positive initiatives agreed upon at the Moscow Nuclear Safety and Security Summit. We also note with satisfaction that the IAEA has begun to play a more active role in this field.

The creation of international legal mechanisms to regulate nuclear activities has continued, with the active involvement of the Agency. One of the obvious achievements in this field was the drafting and adoption of the international Convention on Nuclear Safety. The Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management has been developed under the auspices of the IAEA.

We would like to note the Agency's work in elaborating standards and norms which reflect the latest achievements of countries in ensuring nuclear and radiation safety and security. We also support IAEA activities to put a halt to illegal trafficking in nuclear materials and activities aimed at increasing the level of physical protection and developing national systems for the inventory and verification of nuclear materials. We support enhanced interaction between States to end nuclear smuggling.

Russia has consistently supported IAEA activities aimed at improving the safeguards system. The verification activities of the Agency should continue to be a priority that allows for a technically precise, politically impartial and legally indisputable analysis of the nature of nuclear activities carried out by non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT.

In conclusion, the delegation of the Russian Federation would like to join other delegations that have expressed their approval of the Agency's 1997 annual report.

**Mr. Konishi** (Japan): At the outset, I wish to express my appreciation to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his leadership of the

Agency during the past year and for his very helpful introduction of the Agency's report. The Government of Japan fully supports his efforts to strengthen the Agency's technical cooperation activities through the development of effective programmes aimed at improving the scientific, technological and regulatory capabilities of developing countries, in line with the resolutions adopted at the last session of the IAEA General Conference.

The nuclear tests conducted in South-West Asia earlier this year underscored the importance of maintaining and strengthening the safeguards system of the IAEA. The people of Japan were particularly shocked, as we know at first hand the unspeakable horrors of nuclear weapons and are determined not to allow nuclear tragedies such as Hiroshima and Nagasaki ever again to visit the globe. We therefore renew our hope that the additional protocol will be concluded by a broad range of countries and that it will become the norm at the earliest possible time.

It is also clear that the IAEA must continue to play a key role in ensuring Iraqi compliance with its obligations under the resolutions of the Security Council relating to the abolition of various types of weapons of mass destruction. We continue to support the activities of the IAEA Action Team in this regard. Japan calls upon Iraq to rescind its decision of 5 August, as demanded in Security Council resolution 1194 (1998) of 9 September, and its decision of 31 October, and to resume immediate, complete and unconditional cooperation with the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) and the IAEA. Without the rescission of these decisions, we are prevented from seeing any developments towards the lifting of the sanctions imposed under the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Turning now to the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Japan reaffirms that the safeguards agreement of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with the IAEA remains binding and in force. We are deeply concerned that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has not cooperated with the IAEA with respect to the monitoring of the freezing of its facilities, and that it has not taken clear measures to preserve information concerning its past nuclear activities. It is also regrettable that no progress has been made in the technical discussions between the IAEA and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Recalling Security Council resolution 825 (1993) and the series of presidential statements of 31 March, 8 April, 30 May and 4 November of 1993, as well as the resolution adopted by the General Conference of the IAEA on 25 September, Japan urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cooperate fully with the IAEA for the full implementation of the safeguards agreement.

Finally, I should like to underscore Japan's position that technical cooperation — which, aside from the maintenance of the safeguards system, is the major area of IAEA endeavour — must be strictly limited to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Such cooperation has an important role to play in promoting development in developing countries, and Japan pays high tribute to the activities of the IAEA in this area.

I should like to end my remarks by reiterating Japan's commitment to the work of the Agency.

**Agenda item 20** *(continued)*

**Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance**

**(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions**

**The Acting President:** I have received a request from the delegation of Honduras to reconsider, under rule 81, the resolution adopted this morning on this sub-item, now resolution 53/1 C, the text of which was contained in document A/53/L.17.

Since I hear no objection, we shall proceed to reconsider the resolution.

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President:** I give the floor to the representative of Honduras.

**Mr. Noé-Pino** (Honduras) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Allow me first of all to express my gratitude for the opportunity to speak on the resolution on emergency assistance to Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, which was adopted this morning by the General Assembly. The resolution was initially co-sponsored by Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Israel and Nicaragua, which were joined by Canada, China, Colombia, Cyprus, Ecuador, Greece, Guyana, India, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Senegal, Spain, Uruguay and Venezuela.

The emergency situation in Central America as a result of Hurricane Mitch is indescribable, with considerable human losses and property damage. At this time of death, anguish and sadness, our societies are mobilizing to help thousands of our compatriots in their rescue and assistance efforts. That spirit of solidarity is further strengthened and heightened by the relief and support provided us by the international community. We appeal for solidarity on the part of the Members of the United Nations themselves so that the United Nations organs and agencies as well as the States bilaterally may give us the necessary support to overcome this tragedy.

The figure of speech "to be in the eye of the hurricane" became a painful reality for Honduras. Despite our limited ability thoroughly to evaluate the situation in Honduras and in the other Central American countries, we have determined that to date no less than 300 people have died, an undetermined number of persons are missing, and some 250,000 have left their homes. More than 1 million persons have been affected. Entire communities are cut off from communication due to flooding as 50 rivers have overflowed, causing the most severe damage in the history of our country. These communities have no food, drinking water or medicine and are facing a tragic situation.

The Atlantic coast — the hub of economic activity, generating more than 60 per cent of the gross national product and 80 per cent of export production — is the area most severely affected. This region is completely paralysed, with enormous human and material losses that will require assistance in the short, medium and long term.

In Nicaragua, preliminary information indicates that at least 1,500 persons have died and thousands are missing. At least 180,000 people are without the basic necessities, 172 communities are cut off, and at least 5,066 homes have been destroyed. In Belize, thousands of people were evacuated owing to an alert issued by the national authorities. In El Salvador, according to the extremely preliminary information available, at least 100 persons have died and 27,000 have been affected. It is reported that in Panama, 8,000 persons have been affected and that one person, in the zone of Darién, has died. In Costa Rica, seven people are reported dead, 3,500 have been affected and 2,064 have had to seek refuge in safe places.

As is understandable, there is extensive damage in the region, and the tasks that lie ahead are immense. Despite our grief, the strength of character and the integrity of our men, women and children will make rehabilitation and reconstruction possible, with the generous cooperation of the international community to complement our efforts. As the President of the Republic of Honduras, Carlos Roberto Flores, said last week — and this applies to all the countries of Central America —

> "Our nations have rallied and are ready to work. May God help us and bless us. May God hear our prayers. We are not alone; we are united in fraternal solidarity. The international community is at our side, with solicitude and friendship, to complement our own efforts and resources."

Therefore, I would like not only to thank all the countries for the support they showed in adopting the resolution this morning, but also to add two more points that I believe are important in view of the most recent events. First, I would like to add the name of the Republic of El Salvador to the relevant parts of the resolution, since in the late hours of Saturday and on Sunday the force of the hurricane struck that fraternal country. Secondly, I would like to amend operative paragraph 6 of the resolution to read as follows:

> "*Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly, under agenda item 20, through the Economic and Social Council at the next humanitarian questions segment of its substantive session on the collaborative effort referred to in paragraph 4 above and on the progress made with the relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts of the affected countries."

For the solidarity and cooperation of the international community, the affected Central America countries mentioned in this resolution are all grateful for the Assembly's support and solidarity.

**The Acting President:** The Assembly will now take a decision on resolution 53/1 C, as orally revised.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt resolution 53/1 C, as orally revised?

*Resolution 53/1 C, as orally revised, was adopted.*

**The Acting President:** The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 20.

*The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.*